

THE  
LORD, OUR  
RIGHTEOUSNESS



BY C.M. WRIGHT



# **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**

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# **PREFACE**

Dear Reader,

Thank you for taking the time to read this book. May the Lord Jesus Christ be with you as you read and open your eyes, ears, and heart to receive what He is saying to His Church today.

Let me give you a brief “history” of this book. This book was compiled as a collection of edited transcripts of messages that were preached by me in the pulpit of Antioch in the late 1990s. It has not been released for publication until now. As the Lord has instructed me to focus on the subject of Biblical Righteousness at this time in my life (spring/summer 2025), I am compelled in my spirit to release this document/book to be read at this time.

I “found” this document “buried” in my many (literally) thousands of documents in my Dropbox. I had completely forgotten that this “book” had been put together. It has been so long that I don’t remember who assisted with the transcribing of these messages. Therefore, I cannot thank them by name. But, I deeply appreciate those who labored to both transcribe these messages and to edit them.

I feel directed by the Holy Ghost to make this book available now because it is a different approach and presentation to the subject of Biblical Righteousness than what I’m currently using. It compliments the current approach rather than contradicting it. Reading “edited spoken words” is very different than hearing written-language read (“preached”) aloud. The sentence structure and cadence of the sentences are very different between spoken language and written language. Therefore, I believe that this book, which is being made available to you at no cost in a PDF format, gives you the opportunity to consider the subject of Biblical Righteousness from a different perspective.

BEING A “DELIVERED PERFECTIONIST,” I MAKE NO APOLOGIES FOR THE LACK OF PERFECTION IN THE WRITING AND EDITING OF THIS DOCUMENT. MY NATURE IS TO WORK ON IT UNTIL IT IS “FLAWLESS.” THAT’S WHY IT HAS NOT BEEN AVAILABLE FOR OVER 15 YEARS SINCE IT WAS FIRST COMPILED. I REPENT TO GOD FOR THAT. THE FLAWED WILL NEVER BE ALLOWED BY GOD TO PRODUCE THE FLAWLESS. NEVER! HE SPECIFICALLY CHOSE TO PUT THIS TREASURE/MESSAGE IN EARTHEN VESSELS. THAT DESCRIBES THIS “OLD CLAY POT” PERFECTLY.

Dear Friend, this book is being provided to you at no cost. You are welcome to GIVE it away. You are not authorized to sell it in any manner. Freely you have received, freely give. PLEASE DO NOT LET ME FIND OUT THAT YOU HAVE FINANCIALLY PROFITED FROM THIS BOOK. IF THAT OCCURS, YOU WILL GET TO EXPERIENCE WHAT AN APOSTOLIC, BIBLICAL BISHOP ACTUALLY IS. Selah!

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# CHAPTER ONE

## THE MISSION OF THE HOLY GHOST ON THE EARTH TODAY

### PART ONE

Let's begin at John 16, verse 7-11

***"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."***

In verse 8, the word that's translated, *reprove* means to convict, to refute, to convince. It means to call to account, to show one his fault. This is the work, the mission of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost did not come to give us chill bumps. The Holy Ghost did not come to want us to do back-flips. The Holy Ghost came to convince and unconvinced world. Amen. This is what the Lord came to convince us to do. It's amazing when you consider all the things the Lord could have itemized as the important work of the Holy Ghost; that He would have chosen these three things specifically. Amen. It's really amazing.

I'm going to say something, and I don't have any idea who this might fit. But it is a totally, wrong signal to send your children to allow them to participate in an athletic league on a church day or a church night that causes them to miss service. If you're involved in that, you are making a big mistake. One of the most precious families that was ever in this church; the man stayed in my house when he was a boy; he got the Holy Ghost and his dad kicked him out of the house. He was like a son to me. If you trace back to the point in time when they began to leave the church, is when they began to put that boy's involvement in athletics ahead of church services. And I'm here to tell you something right now, there is no scriptural justification for such a thing, and you're sending an entirely wrong signal to your child. If you or that child is allowed to miss church services because of an athletic event or a league that they're in that always plays on a certain night; occasionally, the school teams have to play on a church day, but you can ask Brother Jerry Humphrey, it is made very explicit to him that those boys are to get back to this service, if at all possible, before it starts, or as soon as they can get here. Nobody said a word to me. I don't know about anything about anybody specifically doing that, but I'm here to tell you something right now. But I'm here to tell you something right now. You can put your kid's athletic involvements ahead of church if you want to. I don't think that there is anybody here anymore involved with their children athletically than I am. So you can't sit there and say that it's because I am against sports because unless you just woke up out of a three thousand year old sleep, you've been around this church very long, you know that I am not against sports and I'm not against encouraging my boys and their participation in the right situation. But I'm here to tell you something. You are sending an incredibly wrong signal. I think you've got your priorities mixed up, and I'm probably talking to someone who's not even here. Would you give him the message for me? Now I know that that's going to make somebody mad and that's alright, that's fine. I'd rather make them mad and cause them to pray a little bit, because they didn't pray about it. There is no way anyone made it a matter of genuine sincere prayer, and asked God if it was the will of God for your kid to be involved in an athletic situation that would cause them to miss church. I don't even want to hear that it is an opportunity for evangelism. Some of you have had your children involved in athletics in secular leagues for years now and you've never brought anybody

to church from those teams. If I'm wrong stand up and tell me right now. Wave your hand. I want to see it. Don't talk to me about evangelism. You're sending the wrong signal! That's not in the notes. You hear me. I'm going to say it again. You're telling that child that you don't believe the Word that says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." You're telling that child that there are things and activities that they can be involved in, that are purely secular that take precedence and priority over being involved in the house of God. That's what you're telling that child. And I'll tell you what. When he becomes sixteen or eighteen and he tells you, "I'm not going to church anymore," and then you want to start forcing him, and he looks in your face and says, "But you let me miss church for X, Y, and Z." You've got nothing left to say. Nothing! I understand people missing church occasionally for one-time events or something like that, but to allow your child to sign up for and be involved in something that's going to keep them regularly out of service, you're making a mistake. You can live your life like that if you want to, but I'm not going to be accountable for your child. You stand before God and answer for them, because I'm not going to as a pastor; not if you're violating that. This isn't the first time some of you have heard this. You haven't paid attention yet. Praise God. But if I don't let my child play, they're going to hate the church. It's exactly the opposite.

(Rev. Steve Rhoads speaking)...I've coached little league baseball for six years now either as a head coach or an assistant coach, and I've pulled my boys out of games when it meant the difference of either winning or losing, and I'm not about to send that message to my sons. And whether it's your kids that you're just going to watch them or you are a coach, and yes it is an opportunity for evangelism at times, and Brother Wright, yes I have brought people here to church, but I'm not about to miss a church service for that, because my boys mean to much, their salvation means to much, and there is no way that I'm going to sacrifice them to a little league baseball team. So if you are the head coach of that team, I'm telling you...you have assistant coaches. You have people who can fill in for you. They will honor you and respect the decision that you've made. They'll see it. I promise you. I'm dealing with a situation right now. I'm having to cancel games or change games and



tell them that I'm not going to be there. They will honor your decision and they will see that you mean business with God, and that you are different from all the rest of this world.

(Bishop Wright speaking again)...You don't have to have a bad attitude when you do that. You don't have to have a "holier than thou" attitude when you do that. You just make a choice and you live by your decision. You live by it. Well that may sober us all up enough for me to be able to preach this message.

The mission of the Holy Ghost is to reprove the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. The word, reprove means to convict, refute, convince. I want you to notice that in the previous verse, that the Lord calls the Spirit, the Comforter. Some people have the opinion that the work of the Holy Ghost is strictly to make us comfortable. This is a very unfortunate translation here. There is a big difference between comforting somebody that's hurting or attempting to make somebody comfortable. The Lord never...never works toward making you or me comfortable. Hello. He never works toward us being comfortable. The Lord always works to bring us to the place where we see ourselves, not to humiliate, not to embarrass, but to bring us to the place that we can be saved.

I used this illustration this morning and it's too good to miss tonight. But you cannot save somebody that doesn't know that they need to be saved. I'll pick on you again. If I threw John down on the floor here, wrapped my arm around him and started doing scissor kicks, he would think I'd gone crazy. "Say, what are you doing Brother Wright?" "I'm saving you!" "What do you mean, you're saving me?" "Well, you're drowning." "No I'm not. You've thrown me down on the floor. This is ridiculous! Get up! Leave me alone!" But if he was in a lake drowning and I did the same thing, he would be more than happy for me to do it. Or, if someone tried to come up and give you mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, and you're sitting there looking them in the eyeball, doing just fine and saying, "what is your deal here?" But, if you can't breathe, and your heart's stopped, and somebody's doing that, you appreciate it if it brings you back to life. The only people that need and accept these kinds of efforts are those that know they are lost.

The work of the Holy Ghost is to show us how lost we are before He can save us. If I'm not willing to see how lost I am, I cannot be saved. And Jesus said, "It is expedient for you that I go away. It is urgently necessary for you that I go away so that the Comforter can come, so that He can convince, convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. I'm preaching the mission of the Holy Ghost to this world. And, I'm going to deal with the first one tonight, and that is to convict us of sin.

I briefly mentioned this this morning but it is the number one problem we've got. You can hardly find sinners anywhere anymore. You go into a bar, and ask people if they believe in God. They say, "Yeah." You ask, "Are you a Christian?" They say, "Yeah." I guarantee there are more Christians tonight in bars than there are in churches. Guarantee you! Nobody's a sinner anymore, because nobody believes that sin will send you to Hell anymore. Nobody believes that! This world has accepted a gospel that if you are a good person, you are going to go to heaven, and they honestly believe that. "I've been good! You're not going to send me to Hell. I'm good!" I'm here to tell you something tonight. That is absolutely not the truth! It's not the truth. In the name of Jesus. I want to talk about this for just a few minutes tonight.

He said He came to convict us, convince us of sin, because they believe not on Me. Mark 16:16 says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned." I want you to see my friend, there is no qualification given there. He didn't say about how much you went to church. Do I believe that you're supposed to go to church? Yes. I believe that's a proof you've got saving faith working in your life. Are you supposed to pray! Yeah. But I want you to know something. He said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." You may have thousands of dollars to give away to the poor. You may never lie, never cheat, never steal. You may pray twenty-four hours a day. You might fast six days out of every seven of the week, but if you have not committed yourself and entrusted yourself to the Lord, Jesus Christ through His Word, in obedience to His Word, you are not saved! "He that believeth not shall be damned." Not mental acceptance, but

believe! The word, believe means to trust in, to rely upon, to cling to. You have given yourself over to...you have entrusted yourself to Him. "He that believeth not shall be damned!"

I don't know how many of you have watched any of the Gaither gospel music videos. How many of you have ever done that? Have you seen those? I'll never forget my boys and I watching those videos, those people would sing and the tears would run down their face. And, the question is...could these people be lost? Well, the question is this...is sin going into heaven? No. Anybody here know The Magruders? They are an Apostolic singing group that has become very popular. Brother Magruder told Brother Suber that they have gone in the music industry as far as they can go, because this is what they know from being involved in that scene, that those who want to be involved in singing for ministry can only go so far. But, in order to go farther, you have to be willing to compromise for the money. Maybe you like to go to sing in concerts. I've been to a couple. I don't enjoy them. It's showmanship. It's "put-on." Paul said, "If I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profits me nothing."

Well, the Holy Ghost is making some of you really uncomfortable. You see, that's our problem. We don't understand that the work of the Holy Ghost is to stir up our lives. I learned in Chemistry class that if you have particles suspended in liquid, and you leave that liquid in a stable state, the particles that are suspended in that liquid will settle down to the bottom, and that liquid will become clear. And, if you leave it alone long enough, it is possible to get so clear, that it will appear as though it is truly pure. But, the only reason that liquid looks so pure is because it hasn't been stirred up in a while. Because the mess in the bottom of that beaker has been allowed to settle, and there has been so little disturbance in that liquid, that all that stuff that is normally suspended in it causing it to be cloudy where you can't see through it, has been able to settle out and find a resting place in the bottom of the container, and the liquid looks clear, the liquid looks pure, but the problem is, nobody has disturbed it lately. And it is the work of the Holy Ghost to do a little shaking, to do some stirring in your life. But it's clouding the issue. No, it's not. What it's

doing is it's proving to you that things aren't what you have presumed for them to be, and only by Him stirring the situation up can He get us concerned enough to seek Him until it's all purified.

I'll tell you what. If you take the proper container and the right type of filter, you can pour that clouded material through that filter enough times, and that filter will sift out all of those particles until the liquid is truly pure. If you set that filtered liquid up next to an unfiltered but undisturbed container of the same fluid but unfiltered, unfiltered but undisturbed, at first glance they would both look equally pure. But, the way you know one is pure and the other one is not is by shaking and stirring them both, and the one that's pure when it's shaken and stirred, will stay pure. But, the one that's not pure, when it's shaken and stirred, suddenly gets cloudy again.

This is the mission of the Holy Ghost in your life. He never gives up, friend. He never promised us He would leave us alone. Paul said in Philippians 1:6, He that has begun this good work in you shall perform it. He's going to complete it. That means every time He shakes your bowl and you get cloudy, He's going to start pouring you through the filter again. He came to convince us of sin! He came to show us our sin! He came to show us our hearts! Not to shame us, not to humiliate us, not to embarrass us, not to make us feel bad. He came to show us our hearts, so that in that situation we would make the effort to go to Him because He is the only filter capable of sifting this mess out. But what do we pray for? We want all of our problems to go away. We want all of our troubles to cease. We want all of our disturbances to stop. We want everything to get smooth. We want all things to be going just right so that our beaker can sit, and all that mess that is suspended in us can filter out or can sift out or settle out until it settles in the bottom, and you look at that, and then we can say, Look...look how pure I am!

Friend, you're not savable because you're pure in the good times. You're savable because you're pure when everything is shaken. You're pure when everything's being stirred up. And friend, when things are being shaken and stirred and you're not pure, rather than

believe that you're not savable, you need to say, "Filter me Jesus. Pour me through. Clean the stuff out of me, God. Do something in my life Lord Jesus to purify me, but don't leave me like I am." But let me tell you something, friend, if I'm sitting there and all that mess is floating around in my life, you think I'm going to pray to be disturbed? No, it looks okay. It feels alright. But, it's not alright. Here we are. We're having revival. Praise God! But, Brother Wright, you don't know how much I'm struggling. Do you mean things are cloudy? And, some of us are just about to lose hope? Some of us are about to go back to regular services and let it all settle out again so we can shout and feel good? Is that what we're looking for? Or do we need to keep on stirring? "But I don't like all this stirring up because I don't like what I see in me. I don't like all the struggles I'm having with prayer, and I don't like all the struggles I'm having with my attitude. And, I don't like all the struggles I'm having with my faith because I really want to believe better about myself than that!" No! No! No! No! Holy Ghost...Keep it stirred up! Don't let it settle out Holy Ghost. The way to get purified is to get filtered. Not left alone until it all settles out. I don't like what I'm seeing either. I don't like what I'm feeling either. But, keep it stirred up, Lord. Don't leave it alone, Lord. Don't let me get to feel better because You haven't disturbed me in a while.

The strangest thing, out of the clear blue this morning, I woke up at quarter to four. I'm not here to hurt anybody's feelings or disturb anybody. I didn't have anything to do with this out here. I did not authorize that. Neither did anybody on this staff. And I'm scared to death. I woke up at quarter to four this morning sweating. Oh God. Don't let anybody come by and see that. And of course, we've got a bunch of chiefs, and not enough Indians around here, and everybody has their opinion about that. Well, I agree with you, it shouldn't have been done. But the problem is it's done now. Phew! Things are cloudy. Things are being stirred up. Oh God! I'm sweating it. I'm sweating bullets! I'm sweating cannon shells! Oh God Help us! It shouldn't have been done. I don't agree that it was done. I would never have decided to have done that. No way! But, I don't know how to put those trees back up right now. I don't know what to do, but pray for the mercy of God in the middle of the night. Oh God have mercy! Things are cloudy, Lord. Pour me through



the filter again. Pour me through the filter again. Pour me through the filter again. Isn't it amazing the things of the world that the Lord can use? Was that the will of God? No. But it's there. And it's working. Oh God. Help me. Help me. Help me Jesus! Have mercy Jesus! Have mercy Jesus! Have mercy Jesus! Hallelujah! Praise God! The word got around that that's where the auditorium's going. That's not where the auditorium's going. Nothing's going anywhere until you vote. I was out of town. I didn't know about it until I got back. Nobody's trying to run past you. Right now you're the least of my worries. You're not what I'm worried about. You're not the ones I'm worried about. I'm choking to death. The noose is around my neck, and the rope is real tight.

What's God got stuck in your container stirring you up? What's God doing that's got you stirred up? You know I don't like orange juice that's been sitting on the shelf for a long time. It changes color. We had grits and eggs for dinner this afternoon. Hmmm. Awesome! And I was drinking orange juice. And my wife had sliced some oranges. And I picked up one of those orange slices and held it up next to that glass of orange juice and I said, "Now, which is orange?" Because if this slice is orange, then this glass wasn't orange. It was some other color. And if you leave this stuff sitting long enough, it won't even be that color. Isn't it amazing that very few liquids work properly until it's properly shaken? You don't even know what you've got in a container until it's thoroughly shaken and stirred up.

What's in you? "Leave me alone, preacher. I don't want to be disturbed." I'm sorry. If I could leave you alone, it wouldn't change a thing, because the mission of the Holy Ghost is to convince. That's the mission of the Holy Ghost...to convince. Stir things up. Get things all worked up so that everything that's been hiding down there in the bottom that looks like it's not there is purely, totally visible. Hallelujah. That's what the Lord came to do. And Peter said, the time has come and now is that judgment must begin at the house of God. So, if God is going to convince the world of sin, the first thing He's got to do is convince the church of sin.

There's a statement I made this morning that bears repeating again tonight since quite a few of you were in other places this morning. The statement is not original to me but I liked it when I heard it and that is, mercy is very deceptive. Man has never understood how long-suffering the Lord is and what that means. Man has never fully comprehended what it means when God is so long-suffering.

Sister Tammy-Faye was raised in a church that didn't believe all that stuff, and her testimony is that she knew it was okay for her to put all that stuff on with a spatula because when she first put it on God didn't kill her. And since He didn't strike her dead, it must be okay.

Let me tell you something. I don't know of anybody that's ever been struck down when they sinned. I don't know of anybody that's ever been struck down when they sinned. I don't know anybody that committed adultery and was killed before they could get out of the bed of adultery. I don't know any of them. I don't know anybody that committed fornication and was struck down immediately after they committed fornication. I don't know anybody like that. I don't know anybody that's gone from a life of purity to drugs or alcohol that when they started doing that stuff that God struck them down. I don't know anybody. I've never heard one story. The problem with flesh and sin is the immediate interpretation of that, God not striking us down, is it must be okay. Mercy is very deceptive because flesh misinterprets mercy. King David himself, it was a minimum by my calculation of two years after he committed adultery before God sent Nathan the prophet. Two years! It was two years before a man of God ever put his finger in David's face. And some of us are involved in things tonight that we think that because we don't feel horrible it must be okay; that because the whole world hasn't collapsed on our heads, it must be okay. We think that, but it's a lie! The wise man Solomon said, "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set at them to do evil."

Do you know what the mercy of God is giving us the chance to do? To prove whether our hearts want to obey God and live for God, or do they want to do everything they can get by with. In Jesus' name.

I've got more to this, but we're going to pray right now. Reach over and take somebody's hand. In fact I really haven't begun my notes yet. We need to pray right now. We need to pray. In Jesus' name. In the name of Jesus. Hallelujah. Holy Ghost...talk to us Lord. Holy Ghost, disturb us. Holy Ghost, don't let us be deceived. Holy Ghost, help us. Deal with us Holy Ghost. Open our eyes Holy Ghost. Convict us. Convince us. Help us tonight Lord. We need to pray. We need Him to help us. Hallelujah.

There is never a day that I don't need a savior. The day that I think I'm saved in the sense that I'm safe. Everything's fine. There's nothing to be concerned about. That's the day I'm in trouble. I need a savior every day of my life. I don't live in fear. I'm not preaching to live in fear. But I'm preaching to you that there will never be a day you or I will earn or deserve salvation. Every day I live, every hour I breathe, I need someone to save me, because I cannot save myself. I will never be saved by my performance. God never expects me to be saved by my performance. I will be saved by my faith or I will not be saved. Hello? The day I start trying to be saved by my performance instead of being saved by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ and trusting in obedience to His Word, that's the day I'm lost. I'm lost.

Jesus said the Holy Ghost is come to convince the world of sin, and sinned because they have not believed in Me. They haven't trusted in Me. They're not living a life of trust in Me.

That's sin. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin. In the name of Jesus, you will never save yourself by what you do. You can't do enough good stuff. You can't talk in tongues enough to be saved. You will be saved because of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ because you are entrusting yourself to Him. It's the only way to be saved. That's why some of you come and you feel so out of place. You feel like such a failure; like there's no hope, because you think you're going to be saved by what you do. What you do is

supposed to be a product of your faith: an expression of your faith, not a substitute for your faith. My obedience is a product of my faith. My works are not a substitute for my faith.

Let me tell you something friend, the very moment you begin to trust what you do, instead of entrusting yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ to save you, that's the very moment you are going to be struggling in sin, because it's sin not to entrust yourself daily, hourly, minute by minute, moment by moment to the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the savior now and forever. He will always be the savior. There will never be a moment in your life that you won't have to trust Him to save you. You're not saved because you got baptized in Jesus name. You're not saved because you talk in tongues. You are saved because you have entrusted yourself to Him enough to believe His Word and by His faith.

Some of us, that's what your problem is. That's why you're so weary. That's why you're struggling with this revival so much. Let me tell you something. I told you from the beginning. All God requires of you is to believe for this revival. He does not require you to produce it! Yes the Scripture says that faith without works is dead, but works without faith is dead too. My works must be a product of my faith. The moment I trust my works; what I do or what I have done, or what I'm going to do to save me or to bring revival, that's the moment I've missed it. I've lost it. I've taken a wrong step somewhere. There will never be a day; there will never be a moment in time that I don't need a savior, and the only way to know I'm saved is to have my trust formally placed in the Lord Jesus Christ daily. Every day. Every day. Every day. Every hour. Every moment. Otherwise...there's sin in me. The Bible says that without faith it is impossible to please Him. It didn't say without works, it said without faith. My works can only be a product of my faith. They cannot be a substitute for my faith. Move love can only flow from my faith, and activate my faith. It cannot be a substitute. I cannot claim that I'm saved because I love God if I have no faith in God, and I don't have faith in God unless I'm entrusting myself to Him. The Lord is stirring us up proving who we're trusting. Thank you Lord for letting me see all over again who I'm trusting. I'm trusting me and I repent in the name of Jesus. Forgive me Lord. I'm trusting me. It's so subtle. It's so easy to trust you. And there's never a time that it's easier

to trust you than when you're praying every day, and you read your Bible every day, and you're coming to church every day, and maybe you're evening witnessing, and you being to feel like, "I've got a handle on this. I've got it together. I've got it down now. I know how to do it now." There's never a time that you're more prone or susceptible to the temptation to trust yourself rather than the Lord when everything is going okay.

Here's what Paul said in Philippians 2:12-13: *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*

The Greek word for worketh is *energeo* which means to activate, to cause to become operative; to bring about. It is God which worketh in you both *to will*... The Greek word for will is *thelo* or *ethelo*, meaning to wish, want, or desire. It is God that causes you to even have a desire. If you don't have a desire, you don't need to try to manufacture one. You need to pray for God to stir up your desire again; to give you that desire again. It is God that causes you to desire; to wish, to want, to desire. And....*to do*... of his good pleasure. It is God that causes me to want to do right. And it's God who enables me to do right. The moment I believe that's not the case, the moment I've got it together, the moment I feel confident in my walk... Paul said that we should put no confidence in the flesh. Holy Ghost, talk to us. Holy Ghost, talk to us. Do we need to pray? Yes, we need to pray. But you're not going to pray unless you're trusting Him to give you the desire to pray. Fear or need will only activate or inspire you to pray for a short amount of time. You will never pray faithfully; you will never pray effectively unless God activates in you both the desire to pray and the ability to pray. God does this. If you're struggling, you're struggling with the wrong thing. If you're struggling trying to get yourself to pray again; if you're struggling trying to get yourself excited about getting yourself coming to church again; if you're struggling trying to get yourself to believe again, if you're struggling trying to get yourself to witness again, you're going to keep on struggling because you can't get yourself to do this. Isn't this what this means about coming to the ends of ourselves? Is there anybody listening to me? Isn't



that what this is all about? And the Holy Ghost has come to convince us...to convince us! You can't do this! I can't do this. If it looks like I'm doing it it's because I'm not trying to do it. I'm letting the Lord do it through me. It's the only way. You hear me right now.

I believe the doctrine we preach here with all of my heart. I believe it's in the Book. I believe it's in the Word of God. I believe in the doctrine of separation. I believe that's in the Book. I believe that without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. I believe all of that. I believe that we need to pray. I believe that people need to be inspired to pray, instructed to pray, led to pray. I believe prayer needs to be organized. I believe that it needs to happen with fasting. I believe that we need to come to church, and the Scripture says, *so much the more so as ye see the day approaching*. I believe all of that. Hear me. I believe it. But I want to tell you something.

Our temptation is the opposite of the Baptists. They preach this "once saved, always saved" stuff. Their danger is falling into the trap of complacency, false security. But friend, ours is just the opposite. Ours is falling into the trap of believing that if I do enough, it will prove I'm saved. Ours is falling into the trap of believing that if we clean up the outside, which means we're saved regardless of what the attitudes are on the inside. You hear me right now. You and I are not saved because of what we do. The Bible says that if we say we have no sin, we are a liar and the truth is not in us. We make Him a liar, and the truth is not in us. *"But if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us of all unrighteousness."* John said, my little children, I write these things unto you that you sin not. But if you sin you have an advocate...That word *advocate*, if my memory is correct, is comforter. It is *paracletos*. It is counselor. It is the lawyer who pleads your case. We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world.

You can't do enough to bring revival. You can't do enough to save yourself. We do what we do if it pleases God by faith. If what we do pleases God, it is done because faith is the author of it and the finisher of our works. Faith is the author of our works. Faith is the

finisher of our works. Our trust in the Lord Jesus Christ is what inspires us to pray, is what inspires us to worship, inspires us to give, inspires us to come to church, inspires us to witness. It is not our fear of being saved or any effort of trying to earn our salvation that causes us to do what we do. And there is nothing that will kill a revival more than self righteousness that is attempting to save itself or produce a revival by actions and activities. We are not trying to log a certain number of hours in order to have revival. We are not trying to log a certain number of days of fasting so that we finally reach a place of having revival. Revival comes from one way...faith. Yes it says faith without works is dead, but those works must be a product of my faith. They are not a substitute for my faith. Is this making any sense? Is this getting through at all? Is this helping at all? Let me tell you something. We've been having services six times a week, but if you think we're going to have a major move of God because of that, you can forget it. People were coming in here and we weren't even having prayer and fasting. We weren't even having special services. And the things that are happening here tonight were happening then. Why?

I want you to listen to me. I'm going to quit in a minute. But you've got to get this. We've been fasting and praying and interceding for months. People have been coming in here that haven't had anything going on. In fact, things were really down in their churches. They walk in here for a two, or three or four services, God moves on them, they go home and they walk back into their church, and things started happening and things started happening at the exact same level that it was happening here. Why? Is God unfaithful? Is He unfair? Why is it possible to come here and have a whole bunch of people lay hands all over you, and you go home and walk into a place that was dead when you left it, and all of a sudden, things are happening and things are moving. Why? What is the key? Why is that possible? And what is it that is necessary to go beyond where we are? Faith is the answer. They came in here, and their faith got inspired and they went home expecting God to do there what they saw Him doing here. And we do it. But we come to church, and we struggle through. And we wonder what's wrong. How many more Meats do we have to have before it gets to where we want it to be? I'm telling you right now. The Lord said that the gates are open. It's not going to be any different than this. In fact, it may get worse

until we believe again. God responds to faith. I want you to listen carefully to what I'm about to say because I don't want you to misunderstand it. You could pray twelve hours today and yet not have any faith operative in that prayer at all, and come to church, and less would happen than if you prayed thirty seconds today but you came into this building with faith. I'm not preaching against praying. I'm preaching about praying in faith. I'm preaching about coming to church in faith. I'm talking about giving in faith, worshiping in faith, witnessing in faith, not doing those things trying to keep from being embarrassed or hoping that the preacher doesn't think you're being uncooperative. But doing these things because of faith. Praise God! God wants to convince us of sin. God wants to convince us that we are righteous.

Let's pray.

Lord, you said that they that enter into your rest, have ceased from their own works. We're not tired, Jesus. We're weary. We're weary because we are trying to produce through our own strength what only you can produce through the Spirit. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, open our eyes and let us see, Holy Ghost. Bring light to our spirits, to our souls, to our hearts, to our minds. Bring light and understanding to us. Oh Jesus, help us. Help us Lord that somehow, some way we might be able to totally entrust ourselves to you. To your goodness. We are only good because You're in us. We are only righteous because You are in us. If we are perfect, it's because You are the perfect one, and you are in us. Jesus, help us. Jesus, help us. Praise God.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **THE MISSION OF THE HOLY GHOST**

### **PART 2**

Let's begin with John 16: 7-11:

*“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”*

There are many of you that really don't understand righteousness, and that's why you are frustrated and weary right now. Praise God. This subject, in my opinion, is life revolutionizing. There is the very real possibility that you will never be the same after this

message. There is that possibility. The biggest problem some of you will have with this is that this will be as contrary to your flesh as anything I have ever taught. You mean, Brother Wright that it's going to be something that I'm going to be told to do that I'm going to be frustrated at trying to do it? No. I'm going to prove to you that there is nothing you can do, and your flesh will be as disturbed over the fact that you can do nothing as it is when I'm preaching stuff you're supposed to do, and you feel like you can't do it. In fact, I am going to submit to you the possibility that you will be more frustrated over being proven that you can't do anything to be righteous than you are over whatever expectations you think are unfairly put upon you. Praise God.

The first point of the ministry of the Holy Ghost to this world is to convince the world of sin, and that judgment must begin at the house of God. The second thing is to convince of righteousness. This sounds strange...to put righteousness in between the two subjects of sin and judgment. It does not make sense. It really doesn't. I can understand sin, and I can understand judgment, but the Holy Ghost has come to convince us of righteousness. I'm submitting to you that it is far more difficult for the flesh to understand righteousness than it is for the flesh to understand sin, and the fact that there is going to be a judgment. I believe that's one of the reasons this was put in the middle because it is the pivotal point of the whole thing the Holy Ghost is doing. It is the fulcrum of salvation, and in case you've forgotten the definition of the word, fulcrum, it's the beam upon which the teeter-totter or see-saw rests. The fulcrum is the balance point between the extremes. It's the thing that makes everything work one way or the other.

Now, I believe that understanding righteousness is the most important point in salvation, and I believe there sufficient scriptures to prove that, as I've said this to you before and I'm not bragging about this because it was never the intent, I just, service after service, just followed the Lord, and every time I prayed for a new message, He would give me a new message on righteousness, and I went thirty-three straight services talking on righteousness. That's why in my brain I've covered the subject and now it's time to go on to something else. But as we have shown by a show of hands from just this group, there's



at least half this congregation that was not there when I taught on righteousness in 1988. And, this is the only way that you and I can survive. And the Holy Ghost would like to convince you tonight on the subject of righteousness.

I'll never forget preaching on this subject at a national meeting that was held in St. Louis, and having an elderly minister come up to me and say, "that is the most dangerous message I've heard preached in years. We agreed years ago among ourselves not to preach such a subject because it causes people to tend toward sin." I thought to myself, "well, there's a slight problem with that dear brother, of course I didn't say it to him because he was an elder, but I thought it, because it's in the Book. And, how can you decide among yourselves not to preach something that's in the Book? Amen! In Fact, I'm going to save this to you, the subject that I'm about to preach to you is more thoroughly covered than the subject of baptism, subject of receiving the Holy Ghost, and definitely more thoroughly covered than the subject of holiness. In fact, I submit to you that there is no such thing as holiness without first having righteousness.

When people do not have a revelation of righteousness, all of their efforts to become holy become **Phariseeism**. I can only be truly holy after I have received righteousness. But I can also prove to you scripturally that if a person truly receives the revelation of righteousness and the impartation of righteousness, they won't want to be anything but holy. Praise God.

There is a disturbing statement that Jesus makes in Matthew, Chapter 5, if you understand how strongly he was opposed to the Pharisees and their self-righteousness, He makes this statement in Chapter 5 and Verse 20. I'll just start with Verse 17.

***"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle..."***

These are small marks, it's like saying a dot over an "i" or a cross bar on a "t" to us, it's similar but not exactly...so He was saying until heaven and earth pass one jot or one tittle,

***"shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so..."***

Now there's a big one right there. It's a dangerous thing right my friend. It's a dangerous thing, my friend when people start saying that stuff in the Bible is not necessary. For instance, let's take a very basic one. Some people say that baptism is not necessary for salvation when the Lord commanded it. To tell someone that baptism is not necessary; it is a **dangerous** thing.

***"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."***

Whoa! Now we know how much they prayed and how much they fasted. We know how careful they were in paying their tithes. And Jesus said,...except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, there's no way you're going to make it. So, with Him making righteousness there is available to us that would exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees. If we want to go to heaven, I assume that's why you and I are here. That's why I'm here. I want to go to heaven. So, what is this righteousness that will exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees?

What is this righteousness? Well, we're going to talk about it a little bit. First of all, in Isaiah 45, let's, by way of introduction, see what the Lord said was going to be available to us concerning righteousness in prophecies in the Old Testament, just two of them. In

Isaiah 45, starting with Verse 22 says:

***Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return. That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength, even to him shall men come and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.***

Now I want to spend just a few minutes helping you have a basis understanding of some concepts of relationships. It is important for you to know that the words, *just*, *justify*, and *justification* come from the exact same root words, *right*, *righteous*, and *righteousness*. They are all from the family of Greek words. Also, the words *sanctify* and *sanctification* come from the same family of Greek words as *holy* and *holiness*. So, when we study this out, this is what we can come to understand that *justification* is the process and *righteousness* is the product of *justification*. We also understand that *sanctification* is the process and *holiness* is the product of *sanctification*. Now, typically we human beings involve ourselves in the wrong one of those sets of situations. We attempt to justify ourselves, and that was the Pharisees' problem. The Lord talked about those who attempted to justify themselves that they were righteous. Man is intent upon justifying himself, and claiming holiness as a gift; claiming that he is sanctified as a gift and claiming holiness.

If I have the time tonight and you have the hunger, it will be a simple thing to prove to you that you cannot be involved in any way in righteousness; that you must receive righteousness as a gift. But if you are to be holy, you must be involved in being holy. I can prove that to you scripturally. But man is wanting to be righteous through his own efforts and holy as a gift, when it's exactly the opposite. Righteousness is the gift, but if you are to be holy, it is a process that you are to be involved in. Amen. Now, I've got Bible for all

of this. We'll see how much of this I am able to cover, and that's going to be determined by your interest, because we are not talking about milk tonight. We are going to deal with meat. If you allow the Lord to do it, you're going to have some stuff to chew on for a while. And, I will say this, if you are willing to receive from the Lord what is going to be taught tonight, it will absolutely revolutionize your whole walk with God. One more time...justification is the process. Righteousness is the result of the process, or the product of the process. Sanctification is the process. Holiness is the product of the process. Now, let me very briefly at this moment explain the difference to you. When the Bible talks about us being forgiven, the word both in the Hebrew and the Greek that is normally translated there *forgiven* is the word that literally means to be pardoned. But, being justified is something completely different than being pardoned. In fact, most people who are just forgiven end up falling back into their sin quite rapidly; the reason is that it is too easy to be reminded of sin that you have only been forgiven of. But, once you accept righteousness by faith, there's almost no way to fall back into that sin because of what happens. When a person is forgiven, you're pardoned, but to be justified to become righteous, the root idea of righteousness is to be innocent; to be declared innocent. Justification is the process of being found innocent. There is a huge difference between being pardoned and being declared innocent. A person that is pardoned is somebody that has been accused of a crime, they have been tried for that crime, they have been found guilty of that crime, been sentenced for that crime, but a higher authority has said, "even though you're proven guilty and have been sentenced for that crime, you don't have to serve that sentence. But to be declared righteous is completely the opposite of that. It means that in the opinion of the court of law you never committed the crime.

Now, the problem with our finite minds is, we can't accept righteousness because we know we did it. We know we did it. And when God tries to justify us and declare us righteous, we argue with that because in our finite minds we know we did that. Therefore, we don't believe that righteousness is possible. Therefore, we labor to be righteous. We try to be righteous through our personal efforts. And, I'm here to tell you something, friend, it is impossible to work hard enough to take a guilty verdict and turn it into innocent. So, no

matter how hard you work, if you're ever found guilty, you are guilty unless you get a new trial. And in righteousness, in justification you're given a new trial, and you've got a new lawyer: the Comforter, the *paracletos*. And, this *paracletos* that is made flesh and dwelt among us, says in the court of law, "Judge, I'm the lawyer, I'm the attorney for the accused, but if anyone is going to be found guilty in this courtroom, let it be me. I'm guilty." And Romans says, "he who knew no sin, became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God. [Actually this verse is from 2 Corinthians 5:21.] When I refuse to accept His righteousness, I'm refusing to be saved His way. I will live a constantly frustrated life as a Christian, and eventually in despair, throw my hands up and quit, because it is impossible to get around the necessity for someone to take my guilt.

When the prodigal son came home, all of his flesh and everything said, all the evidences of his clothing, the cleanliness of his flesh said he was guilty. But, when the father took his best robe and covered up all of that mess, the father says, "don't lay this on him. Lay it on me." When you look at him, I want you to see innocence. Now in a few moments you will see that the scripture says that the only way you and I can be righteous is by faith; the point being that in order to believe this, in order to have this, you can only get it by faith, because there is nothing you can do to earn someone saying, "lay the guilt on me. Declare him innocent." You can't earn that. You can't deserve that. How can a guilty person deserve someone else saying, "I'm innocent, but I'm now guilty?" I make myself guilty so that he can be innocent. How can a guilty person do that? How can we earn that? How can we deserve that as a guilty person? So, if I do not receive it as a gift, if I do not receive it as an act of love, if I do not receive it by faith, I can have it no other way. Therefore, rather than being declared innocent, I am always the guilty person who was just forgiven. And, that's one of the reasons why I feel it necessary to repent for things over and over again.

Let me ask you a question. If you kill somebody and you are about to be executed, and the governor says, "pardon him", and you know the next day you're supposed to go in the electric chair, rather than leaving this life from the electric chair, you leave the prison walking out a free man, do you think that person walks out and forgets the fact that he killed

somebody, and he should have died and he didn't die? Do you think that person just forgets that? No human being is so hard that they don't understand what happened to them, and that they had taken somebody's life, and yet here they are...free to go! You don't think that they have dreams ***when they wake up in the middle of the night dreaming that they were on their way to the*** electric chair, and they wake up in a cold sweat, shaking all over and realize, "I'm not in jail, and I'm not going to the electric chair tomorrow. I am free! I have been pardoned!"

Do you think God wanted his bride, his wife, his own children to live under that kind of a pressure, that kind of a feeling? No. The only way we could reach the place where we can live free from that constant reminder that I was guilty, and I was pardoned is somehow to be declared innocent, to be justified so that I would be righteous or innocent, the only way I can live free from that, so that there are no haunting dreams. There is no fear that I'm going to go back. There is no fear that someone is going to change their mind that I'm going to go back to jail or back to the chair. There is no fear of that because I am righteous!

I am really sorry. I am looking at faces that reveal that this is really blowing your mind, and I'm sorry. I thought you knew all of this. I thought you understood this. Well, let's go a little deeper.

Let's go to Jeremiah, Chapter 23, Verse 5 and 6. This is the second prophecy.

***"Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."***

Here is the problem. This is not really the way we live. Some people would like to condemn the Jews, but we live just like the Jews did. Romans, Chapter 10. They had the law. They were given the law. They were expected to live by the law, but the Lord knew from the beginning that they could not live by the law. It was not possible for them to live by the law, because the Scripture says in Romans, Chapter 8, Verse 1:

***“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”***

What he's saying there is this: Let me boil it down to the simplest terms possibly can. When the Lord gave the law and told them to keep the law, He knew they couldn't do it. That's why He set up a system of sacrifices that was intended to procrastinate, to put off the payment of their sins and the judgment that was due for those sins. So, therefore, when they slew that lamb on the day of atonement every year, the only thing that did was send the judgment for their sins ahead one more year, and they constantly lived with the threat of the judgment that was ahead one more year until finally the ultimate Passover lamb was slain on Calvary, hanging on a cross, and after that there was no more need for sacrifice for sins because His sacrifice didn't send our sins ahead one year, His sacrifice eliminated our sins. Don't you understand that? But the Lord knew from the beginning that flesh could not keep the law. Not, that the law was weak, Paul said in Romans 7 that the law is good. The law is good and the law is righteous. The law is just, but the problem was, flesh can't keep the law. And James says that if you offend in one point of the law, you are guilty of all of it. That means that once you have ever made a mistake in your life,

it is never possible for you to ever again have any hope of being righteous by your efforts. I mean one time ever. The first lie you ever told; that was it forever for the rest of your life. You could never again be righteous by your efforts. Ever again!

I got in trouble with this a few years ago while preaching. I preached that there are two plans of salvation. Today, right now there are two plans of salvation. There's one gospel but there is two plans of salvation. One plan of salvation today, this very day says that if you could keep all of the law without sinning one time from birth to death, you could go to heaven. Right now! If you could do that, because it's sin that keeps me out of heaven, if I don't break any of the laws of God for my entire life, I would go to heaven. But, there's only one person that's been saved by that. His name is on the wall [Jesus]. He's the only one that's ever been saved that way. And, because He was saved that way, He is the only one that has the right to say, "I will take this righteousness of mine and give it away." I'll take this righteousness because He was truly innocent. He was the only one who was truly innocent. Don't you understand that if He was not saved by keeping the law, the rest of us would have no hope. Because, only innocence can die for guilty. Innocence can substitute for guilty. Guilty can't die for guilty. Guilt dies for its own guilt. That's why the Bible says that the Son shall not die for the sin of the Father, and the Father shall not die for the sin of the Son. We die for our own sin. So, if Jesus Christ was in any way a sinner, He could not have died for us. He would have been guilty trying to die for guilty, and that doesn't work. But, since He kept all of the law, He was innocent dying for guilty. So, He was saved by keeping the law. But, of course he was the Son of God. He also had flesh that was no more capable of sinning than the angels.

Now they sinned didn't they? But, because the blood comes from the Father, and this is personal, but whatever, some of you know this and some of you don't; Angie has the rarest of blood types, AB negative. And, she gave birth to a baby that has the most common of blood types, O positive. Do you know why? Because her father has O positive. So, a baby was born to a mother with the rarest of blood types with the most common of blood types because the blood comes from the father. And while His mother was a human, His Father



was God Almighty. So, He did not inherit from Adam what we did. So, therefore, He did not have in Him the heritage of sin, not sin, but the heritage of sin that we receive from Adam. So, therefore, He could have sinned, but didn't. Just like the angels did sin, but they weren't made with the ability to sin. They were made with a choice, but they weren't made with a propensity to sin. That's why when they sinned, there was no second chance. There was no mercy, no plan of salvation for angels because they weren't born with a propensity to sin, and so therefore when they sinned it was all over with. It was done, finished. No second chance. Judgment. Period. That's all. Can I add, it would have been the same with Jesus Christ? If the man, Christ Jesus would have sinned, there would have been no mercy. But, He lived that perfect life so that you and I would have someone to substitute for us, because the Bible says, "the soul that sinneth shall surely die," That is the law of God. That is the Word of God. It is impossible. I don't care who you are, where you're from, or how good you think you are, if you've ever sinned, death is the only thing awaiting you and you can't do anything good enough to forestall that. You can't do enough good stuff to be exempt from that. You are guilty, and the only way for you to be exempt from that is for somebody who is innocent to willingly take your place.

That's why we know that Hell is, the resting place of the righteous dead is in a different location now than it was before His death, or before His resurrection, because, He had to go to Hell for us. He didn't actually go to the place of torment, but He went to the holding place of the souls of the dead. Three compartments or three parts to it: paradise, Abraham's bosom, resting place of the righteous dead, a great gulf separating that from the resting place of the unrighteous dead, or Seoul, or Hades. Hades now speaks specifically of the place of flame. But when it was used before the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it was speaking of the place with all three compartments. Everybody went to Hell. Some people went to Abraham's bosom or Paradise because they were righteous. Some people went to the place of torment because they were unrighteous and lost. So therefore, Jesus went to Hell for us. But when he resurrected, the Bible says He led all of those people that were in captivity in Paradise, he led Paradise to a new location that Paul called something similar to the third Heaven that is not now in the Earth but out there somewhere. That's why the

Bible says there would be a time when Hell would enlarge herself, meaning that the entire area that was once taken up by Paradise, the great gulf, and the place of torment is now all torment. Of course, we needed the extra room, because there's a lot more people there now than there was before. A lot more. Praise God!

So the Scripture teaches us in Romans 10 and Verse 1 that righteousness is a revelation. Righteousness is a revelation.

***“Brethren, My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”***

What is it that is keeping Israel from being saved? Listen carefully please! I want you to hear this! What is it that is keeping Israel from being saved? He is going to tell us.

***“For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God...”***

They are not lost because they don't know God or anything about God or have no desire for God. They are being lost in spite of a zeal for God.

***“...that they have a zeal of God but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”***

Forgive my statement which would sound extremely egotistical, but I think I have demonstrated in the past that when the Spirit of revelation kicks in that it's possible to go as long as that Spirit would choose to deal with that. I'm going to say to you tonight that with just the slightest bit of spiritual revelation that one verse could be talked on for a couple

of weeks. Suffice it to say for the sake of time I'm going to abbreviate that down to a few minutes. I want you to hear this unless you want to go to Hell for the same reason that the Hebrews were going to Hell.

***“...For they being ignorant of God's righteousness,”***

And I think it's fair to say that there are some of us sitting here right now in that same condition. When you are ignorant to God's righteousness, it makes you vulnerable to something else. It makes you go about to establish your own righteousness, because God's righteousness or true righteousness cannot be obtained. It must be submitted to. My Lord! Let me tell you something. There are some of us that resist submitting to righteousness as much as some precious ladies resist submitting to a husband. And, if you hear them tell it, they have all kind of good reasons why. He's not trustworthy. He's this, that, and the other. And you know what? There are some of us here that have that exact same attitude toward God. “I can't trust Him. He's this. He doesn't do that. I've got to make sure that I'm righteous by what I do. I can't trust Him to take over whether or not I'm righteous. Why, if I did that I'd starve to death! Our bills would never get paid. He makes stupid decisions, etc. etc. etc., all the regular reasons for why someone doesn't submit to the authority God has place over them.

Look at this terminology. There is not one letter in any word in this verse that is not very carefully chosen by the Holy Ghost. When you are ignorant of what true righteousness is, God's righteousness, because we know inherently we need to be righteous we will try to go about to establish our own righteousness, and in our efforts to establish our own righteousness, it makes us rebellious to and un-submitted to God's righteousness. Can I boil it down and make it even simpler? If you are trying to be righteous through your efforts, it is mutually exclusive to say that you are righteous from God. In other words, you are one or the other. You have either received righteousness by faith or you are trying to

be righteous through your own works. It is impossible for both situations to exist simultaneously. You cannot have righteousness by faith, and attempting to be righteous through your own works. It is impossible!

Excuse the old cliché. It is impossible for the woman to be “wearing the pants” in the family and be submitted to her husband. There is something that is communicated in all that; isn’t there? And when people want God to serve them instead of them submitting to God’s way, then they are not righteous. And this is the very thing that was causing Israel to be lost.

They were not willing to accept righteousness as a gift. They were not willing to accept righteousness as an impartation. And, in being imputed, they weren’t willing to be righteous because someone made them righteous, rather than being righteous because they earned it through their good deeds.

Do you understand that it is impossible for God to be no respecter of persons and allow some people to be righteous through good deeds and have to make other people righteous by impartation? Do you understand how impossible it is for God to be no respecter of persons? God is just and fair and no respecter of persons. There is one standard for all. You may have never lied, stolen, cheated, robbed, killed, used drugs, committed fornication, and the list goes on and on and on, but you are just as much in need of imparted righteous as Hitler if he would have received it! Just as much! A person who has never done anything morally wrong is just as much in need of righteous by faith as a murderer! Just as much! No different! And you see, that’s why Jesus said, He came not to call the righteous but the sinners to repentance. In that verse He implied the self-righteous. When you read the context, He’s not talking about those who are righteous by faith, He’s talking about those who have considered themselves righteous because they have justified themselves by their works. In their own mind they’ve done enough to be excused. He’s not looking for those who think they’ve done enough to be saved by their goodness and their works. Those people can’t be saved. That’s why Jesus looked at the scribes and the Pharisees and said, there are going to be harlots and publicans that come into the Kingdom before you.

Do you know how livid it made those overly-religious people who gave themselves to efforts of being righteous by all of their prayers and all of that stuff, for Jesus to look them in the face and say the very people they didn't even want to be in the same house with, that they would walk on the other side of the street to avoid the risk of being touched by, for Him to say that there were going to be harlots and publicans who were going to enter the Kingdom before them? Do you understand how absolutely "cranked" that made them? No wonder they sought to stone Him on one occasion. It's no wonder they sought to crucify Him. That's ridiculous! They said, if the rich can't go to heaven, how is anyone else going to make it?

And He really blew their minds when the Scripture says he spoke this parable unto them that considered themselves righteous and condemned others. The Pharisee and the publican went up to the temple to pray, and the Pharisee stood and said, God I thank you that I'm not like other men. I pray. I fast. I pay my tithes, and I don't do things like that publican over there. And Jesus said that the publican wouldn't so much as lift up his head. He was over on the floor beating on his chest, which was a Jewish custom or sign of deep sorrow. He said, Lord have mercy on me a sinner. And for Him to look at those righteous people, in their minds, and say that only one of those two men went down to his house justified, and that was the sinner and not the "good guy?" Do you wonder why they crucified Him? He was rocking their world! He was destroying everything they had based their whole lives on!

That's why it's really hard for some of you, for a backslider to walk in this building, because the first thing you want to do is give them that little look, or jump on their case and starting cleaning them up and getting them right again. You think that's the only way for them to be saved, is to be instantaneously changed like where you are. And you can't just love them and leave it in the hands of God and let God work it out, especially knowing they already feel ashamed and rejected, and them coming into this building and you treating

them like that, is going to run them off. And somehow you get pleasure that you've kept the House of God pure by running them off where as you are probably more in danger of going to Hell than they are?

Do you know that those who are self-righteous are in more danger of going to Hell than the harlot and the publican according to Jesus? Hello? There are those of you that can't leave the pasturing to me, and want to clean people up for me. You want to give your little look and show your little attitude. God's got a lot of backsliders He's dealing with right now but He couldn't afford to bring them in this building yet. There's too much self-righteousness and not enough righteousness from God. When a person knows they're righteous only because of the Gift of God, they're more than willing to love people and let Jesus do the work in them rather than giving them that little look. Do you understand that when people walk in this building that aren't doing what's preached here, they are already sensitive to rejection as they can be, and by your slightest little carelessness, you could communicate something that would drive them out the door before God even has a chance of loving them.

What I preach here I have preached twenty-six years. There is no appreciable change in anything I've preached concerning salvation in twenty-six years. I haven't changed it. I'm not going to change it. If I haven't changed it by now, I'm not going to change it. But, there's one thing I have changed. I've stopped trying to make people do what only God can help people do. I've got to preach the Word, but I am not a policeman. And, I don't need you to help me be a policeman. Some of you think that you're proving to me how much you believe what I preach by beating up on people who aren't living what I'm preaching. You think you are impressing me. You're impressing me alright, but not like you want to.

Let me continue with the point I wanted to make from Verse 3.

***“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.”***

Friend, if you’re trying to be righteous by what you do, do you understand you are chargeable to never make a mistake? If you are trying to earn your way there it’s one strike and you are out! Forever. Christ is the end of that.

***“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is to bring Christ down from above:) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;”***

This is what righteousness is saying. All of this stuff is what righteousness says.

***“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness;”***

Some of you are sitting there saying, “well what about Acts 2:38? I can simply clarify that. Let’s go to the beginning of the book of Romans, Chapter 1, Verse 1. Let’s read to whom the book of Romans is addressed.

***“Paul, A servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ; To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints; Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.”***

The book of Romans is written to Christians that are wanting to try to be saved, to stay saved. It is written to people that have obeyed the Gospel which is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the way we apply it to our lives. It is written to those who have already repented of their sins which is death, already been baptized in water in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ which is burial, and written to those who have already received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and have already spoken in other tongues which is resurrection. It is not written to sinners. It is not written to people to tell them how to **get saved**. It is written to tell people how to **stay saved**. The plan of salvation for a sinner is not in this book. Paul is writing to the Romans, and thankfully to us because of the Romans, to tell people how to live a life above condemnation in the Spirit, how to deal with their flesh, how to deal with guilt and shame and all of that, so that they can walk in faith of Jesus Christ, be pleasing to God, and be saved when He comes.



The problem is, of course, that some being ignorant of the Word of God, and not knowing how to rightly divide the Word of God, take Romans 10 as a plan of salvation. Let me tell you something. I've said this before, and I'm going to say it again. How in the world educated people can forget everything they've ever been taught about language and grammar and everything else when they read the Bible, I don't know! But highly educated, intelligent people forget all of that stuff! When it comes to spiritual or scriptural interpretation, if we treated regular books like we treat the Bible, we would be the most confused bunch of people there is. Can you imagine reading a book on highway laws like we do the Bible?

Now, I have a CDL, that's a commercial driver's license. Now, I'm going to tell you something right now. If you weren't paying attention, and you got a hold of the requirements for a CDL, and you'd never read or studied any of that, and you just wanted a driver's license to drive your little putt-putt car, you would "freak out." To need to know the pressure on air breaks and all of this kind of stuff, you would be overwhelmed and say, "What is this!? You would absolutely go nuts. That's exactly what people do. They take books of the Bible that don't apply in one situation, and they just pull stuff out because it sounds good, and if fits and they like it. It has nothing to do with the situation in which they applied it. That's absurd! From Romans through the Book of Revelation there's not one thing written to an un-saved person. There's not one verse in any of those books that tells us the plan of salvation because those books are written to people already saved! And when people take verses out of those books to come up with a plan of salvation they are not rightly dividing the Word of God.

Isn't it II Timothy 2:15 which says,

***"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."***

That's absurd! Why in the world does anybody expect to find the plan of salvation in a book written to people who are already saved!? And because this chapter 10 in the Book of Romans is so misused, abused and perverted, we cheat ourselves out of some of the most powerful verses that help us be saved because we stay away from stuff that misused, abused and perverted. That's like saying because somebody commits adultery and fornication, I'm not going to get married. No way! That's ridiculous! Because David fell into adultery, I'm not going to get married and fall into that temptation. That's stupid!

What I've just read to you, my friend, is some of the most powerful verses that are going to help you to be saved and stay saved. Some of you by your restlessness are proving how shallow you are. You understand that don't you? I don't mean to be offensive. But if you are having a hard time concentrating on this, you need to be disturbed, because it proves you're still a babe rather than being mature like some of you think you are. Hebrews Chapter 5 says that those who are mature can handle strong meat. (Heb. 5:14) So if you are sitting here bored out of your mind and you don't have a clue what I'm talking about, you need to go and find yourself some place to pray and say, Oh God, you need to help me because I'm not near along where in God where I thought I was. I see some of you sitting here saying, Oh yeah...that's good...I need to have that, and I see others sitting here with blank looks on your faces bored to death. You haven't understood a word since I started. You scare me to death, because some of you have been sitting around here for ten to fifteen years, and you don't have a clue, and you wonder why you struggle so much.

There's that little story that I've told that I like: the story about the mother who took her three or four year old daughter up to bed, put her in the bed and went back down stairs to do some work. All of a sudden, the mother heard this thump on the floor. She rushed upstairs and she said, "Honey, Honey. Are you okay?" And the little girl from the floor drowsily called out, "Yes momma, I'm okay." "What happened", asked the mother? And the little girl said, "I went to sleep too close to where I got in." That's exactly what some of you have done. You've gone to sleep too close to where you've gotten in the church, and

this kind of teaching is way over your head. I'd be encouraged if it was going closely over your head, but this is way over your head. And I'm not trying to be disparaging to you, you need to be concerned if you are sitting here bored out of your mind.

This is awesome stuff; not because I'm teaching it. This is awesome stuff! This sets me free! Do you understand that? This takes all the pressure off. This insulates me and protects me from every condemning dart that the devil throws at me. If I am righteous by faith, and it is the shield of faith wherewith I quench the fiery darts of the wicked; if I don't have faith that produces righteousness, then I have no protection against his accusations. That's why you need this. That's why some of you are so vulnerable. You don't have faith that's been accounted for righteousness so that every little dart that he throws at you sticks! It sticks! It's not supposed to stick, but in your faith. Your faith is supposed to be the shield that blocks every bit of that. Ha! You didn't get me with that one. In your face, devil! What's really good is to pull them out of the shield and start throwing them back at him. That's kind of hard to do when you're pulling them out of your chest. Praise God!

Listen to this! Romans 10, Verse 9:

***“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raise him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”***

There is never a day that I'm exempt from that. There is never a day that I can progress from that. There is never a day that I can separate myself from that. That's what gives me the courage to obey the plan of salvation in the first place. That's what keeps me saved every day that I get up. That's what gives me peace when I lay down. I don't lay down having confidence that I'm going to be saved, because I prayed today! I lay down with confidence that I'm going to be saved if I die in the middle of the night because He died for me! His innocence...taking on my guilt has made me innocent! My God! That's why some of us are so weary...so weary of this

revival because we've done everything we know to do and we're so exhausted! It's not happening like we thought it was going to happen! That's because revival is going to come by faith, and if you don't even have enough faith to have righteousness, you don't have enough faith for a harvest, to be a part of a harvest. Let me tell you something. If three days worth of services is wearing you out, that sure ought to be telling you something. You must be worn out because of all of the effort you're having to make trying to be righteous through your works. Hallelujah!

Paul understood this; the negative aspect of this in Philippians he tells us that the negative result of having righteousness that is not from God. Philippians 3:7 says,

***“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things...”***

***“I have suffered the loss of all things”***...all things! What things? Read in the previous four or five verses what it was he lost. He lost all of his pedigree! Everything he was trusting in to be righteous! He counted it but loss! It wasn't money. It wasn't houses. It wasn't possessions.

Read starting at verse 4: Do you want to talk about the things he counted as loss for Christ; the things that were gain to him?

***“Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel,”***

He's bragging now. Here are all the reasons why he was so good; why he could trust in himself.

***"...of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."***

Those were the things that were gain to him. Those are the things he had to lose to gain Christ.

When I was a kid going to Sunday school they gave away pins for perfect attendance. Now I know people who had thirty-year pins. They never missed a Sunday morning service in thirty years. Let me tell you something friend. When you get to the Pearly Gates, the Lord is not going to be the least bit impressed by your thirty-year pin. That's exactly right.

Hey, we're not doing this prayer chain to earn something. We're doing it to participate, and some of you have never missed a week. Thank you for never missing a week, but if you think that makes you better than people in here that have missed a few weeks, you just wasted all those hours of prayer. Everyone of them. If you walk in here on Saturday and there's hardly anyone here or there's no one here and you're in here praying, and the whole time you're praying all you can think about is "Lord if nobody else came today, here I am!" You might as well pack up your little duds and go home. You just wasted all of your time. You can't pray long enough for God to pay attention to what you're saying if you're praying with that attitude. Apparently there are some of you here that have experienced that. "Lord, where is everybody else at. I'm in here all by myself. Well Lord, you're lucky that at least I have 'showed' up. And if anything good happens tomorrow in service, it's because I was here praying today." Do us a favor. Don't show up next Saturday. You're ruining the revival.

Read Verse 7 again and continue:

***“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.” Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things...”***

...the loss of all things what? Not money, not houses, not land. That's ridiculous stuff! No, he wasn't trusting money and houses and land to get him into heaven. He was trusting that pedigree he just read. And he realized that he had to lose every bit of that, and trust solely in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Read:

***“...and do count them but dung...”***

Oooh! That's a strong statement here. “Well Lord, I'm going to give these things up for you, but do you understand the sacrifice I'm making? I'm giving up all of this wonderful stuff that I am for you Lord. I'm going to let you save me although I don't think I'm too far behind it myself.”

Paul said, “I counted it dung.” Does anybody need a definition of that? I didn't think so.

Read:

***“...that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:***

And if I can have righteousness which is of God by faith, what position does that put me in?

Read:

***“That I may know him...”***

Whoa! Some of you have said recently, “I don’t feel like I know God.” Do you know what you just admitted? “I’ve been trying to earn His righteousness, and I just don’t seem to be getting anywhere, because I don’t know Him very well. I don’t know where He’s at. When you finally start to get this, you feel...man!! It’s irritation that comes. It’s not relief initially. The first reaction is, “Man...I’ve been wasting all this time. This is ridiculous. I’ve wasted all this time.” But once you get over that, there really is relief! Once you can get over grieving over all this time you have wasted... Because we are not really above having the reaction of the Pharisees of being angry, finding out it is futile regardless of what we do in an attempt to earn anything. We’re not above being angry at that. We’re not above being frustrated and irritated...wanting to chew somebody up and spit them out. We’re not above that. It’s a purely natural feeling and the natural result of that natural feeling is either submit to Him or crucify Him. You are going to do one or the other.

Read verse 9 again:

***“And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him...”***

Do you want to know God? There’s no way to know Him without being willing to accept righteousness by faith. No way! There is no way to know Him. There is no way to know Him. There is no bridge to get from here to there. There’s no key to unlock the door to go from this room to that room. There is no way to go from here to Him accept by the bridge of righteousness received only by faith! Hallelujah!

***“That I may know Him.”***

Let's read a little bit more there. There are some other pertinent things to receiving righteousness by faith. Let's read verse 10 again:

***“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death: If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,”***

Here's what I do. Here's what I do. Here's what I do. This is what righteousness by faith causes you to do. It causes you to forget...forget what?...those things which are behind. What's behind? Anything which is behind the time that it is at this very moment is behind. “Well, I had a rough day today.” What does that have to do with this moment? “Well, I have been struggling in prayer all this week.” What does that have to do with tonight? How can this be so? Because righteousness is being declared innocent! And I walk in righteousness. Well you say that inside that robe is all kind of filth. Isn't it great that nobody can see that?

Psalms 32:1 says:

***“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.”***

His sin is covered? Do you know what your problem is? You struggle today, so you know what you walk in here feeling like? Like you're absolutely naked and everybody can see everything you've ever thought wrong, and everything you've ever done wrong, and everything you've struggled with today. You think they can see all of that. And if you try to cover up behind that mask of piety, then you are a hypocrite. If you try to hide that



through your pretense, through your efforts to look righteous, you are a hypocrite. But if you come in here trusting in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, you are not a hypocrite. You are righteous! The difference between the hypocrite and the person who's righteous, both of their sin is covered, but one is covered by God, the other is covered by their own self. And God hates the hypocrite. God hates the hypocrite! But the problem isn't that the hypocrite doesn't understand what's supposed to happen. The hypocrite knows he's not supposed to show everybody every filthy, nasty thing about himself. But he's trying to cover it through his own methods. Whereas, we're supposed to come with it covered with the innocence of the Lord, Jesus Christ. But we think that we're being honest and humble when we come in and disrobe ourselves before everybody and say, "Look how nasty I am. I've been wallowing in a pig pen all day. Aren't I humble? You are not humble. What you're proving is that you are not trusting in the righteousness of the Lord, Jesus Christ. That's right. Do you think that the Lord wants you to come in here and say, I've had a horrible day. Somebody cut me off, and I got on their bumper and just stayed there blowing my horn. And I asked the boss if I could get off early today and he told me No! So I gave him a scowl and went back to my desk grumbling under my desk. Creep!" And we think we're supposed to come in here and display all of those faults and failures for us to be righteous and be good, because we're trying to be humble. That's not humility. That's pride. It proves that you're not willing to accept the covering as a free gift.

This is blowing some of your minds because you didn't believe that I believe this. The problem isn't what I believe; it's what you believe. Because you're so into self-righteousness that when I'm preaching the Word of God over how you're supposed to live, you automatically think you're supposed to do it, and then you either get mad or get weary, one or the other. And I'm telling you right now. There's not a thing I preach that you can do. There isn't one thing I preach, you're able to do. There's not one thing I preach I'm able to do. The only way to get it done is to accept righteousness by faith, and let the Lord do it through me. Because I can't do it!

I used that scripture last night, Philippians 2:13:

***“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”***

Some of you want to know, “How in the world can I do right? I want to do right, Brother Wright. I want to obey what the Word of God says. I want to obey what’s preached, but I don’t know how to do it!” Listen to this.

Romans 6, starting with verse 1 says:

***“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead...”***

Some of you have a problem. You’re trying to stay alive. Praise God! I’m trying to be alive. I’m trying to be dead!

Hold your finger there and go to Galatians 2:20. Listen to this now. Some of you are trying to be alive. You're not supposed to be alive. You're supposed to be dead.

***"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God:"***

How does a person frustrate the grace of God?

***"for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."***

God have mercy on us!! Do you know what you're doing when you try to earn what God has for you? Do you know what you're doing when you come in here with the attitude that you're earning something by coming to church, or you're earning something by giving an offering, or you're earning something by praying?!! You're making the death of Jesus Christ of no value!! And you're frustrating the grace of God! You're frustrating the grace of God! All that He did for you! All that He went through being born in a manger in a cave or a stable! All those years He spent. All of that ministry. All of that sacrifice. All of that humiliation and shame and suffering that He went through in the garden and on the cross, simply by the act of trying to be good and righteous through your efforts, makes it all worthless. You are frustrating God to death!

I've said it to you before and I'll say it to you again. The revival God has promised us and the harvest that's coming is totally and solely a product of the fact that you believe it, you cannot produce it, you cannot earn it and you cannot deserve it. If you cannot walk in here trusting in His righteousness, believing the promise of His Word, instead of counting how many hours you prayed today. We need to pray, but we don't pray to be righteous. We pray because we're righteous. We want to be a part of Him. We want to participate in what He's doing. Not to earn anything from him. I can't pray enough to earn anything!

In I Corinthians 13:1

***“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and not charity it profiteth me nothing.”***

The point to all this is, “I can’t earn a thing.”

I do not frustrate the grace of God, Paul said. I do not frustrate the grace of God. For if righteousness is of the law, then Christ is dead in vain. My God! Help us Lord!

Romans 6, verse 6 says:

***“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him,”***

Listen now. Here’s what you’re supposed to know. This is supposed to be personal relevant knowledge; something you have experienced and know to be a fact.

***“...that the body of sin might be destroyed.”***

Listen to this. Do you understand that according to God, God who can do all things; that literally because He who knew no sin became sin for us that when He hung on that cross, I hung there with him. That my sins were paid for because my old man, my sins hung on that cross with Him. The Greek word is literally means “crucified at the same time in fellowship with.”

***“...that henceforth we should not serve sin.”***

We don't believe that so we do serve sin. We don't believe that we were crucified with Him. I don't have to crucify myself. I don't have to be an ascetic. That was a denomination in Jesus' day of Judaism that believed they were righteous with God because they denied themselves all physical pleasure. Needless to say, they died of because they didn't believe in sex. I'm serious. They wouldn't have relations and they wouldn't get married, so they had no children and therefore the whole sect died off. God who created man and woman and put them together in order to be a demonstration of the relationship Christ and the Church, the Ascetics called that wrong. They called it bad. In fact, Jesus said that to forbid to marry is a doctrine of the devil. Just put that wherever you need to put it. It's a doctrine of the devil. I Timothy 4:3.

***“for he that is dead is freed from sin.”***

How do you get dead? To believe and know that you are crucified with Christ.

***“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing the Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye...”***

The word, reckon, if you look it up in the Greek is speaking of a mathematical calculation, considering all the facts and figures. You come to a mathematical, logical conclusion. Likewise reckon ye what? Come to this mathematical, logical conclusion.

***“...also unto yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.”***

Not the way we use the word, “I reckon,” which we mean, “I guess.” The word, reckon, in the Greek had nothing to do with, “I guess.” It meant to consider the facts and come to a firm, established, verifiable conclusion. What is it that I'm supposed to conclude and know for a fact?

Read:

***“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God...”***

Is that what we really believe? We are all time looking around for the sin-boogie man that's going to get us. Oh No! That's temptation. Oh Lord! Help Me! Oh God! Hello? But that's not the way the Bible says you are supposed to live. You're supposed to say, “Now wait a minute. I am a child of God. I was crucified with Christ. I am dead to sin. I'm free.” You say, “That's a head trip.” No. It's a matter of faith. Some of you are of the opinion that the only thing you have to believe is Acts unto 2:38 and one God. There's a whole lot more to believe than that.

Read:

***“...dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,”***

Let, Let, Let. Sounds like a decision now doesn't it? Doesn't that sound like a decision? Sounds like a decision to me. That means that you have a choice, and your choice is based on whether or not you believe. Let not sin therefore do what?

***“...reign in your mortal body...”***

The word, “reign” means to rule; have dominion. Let not sin rule you. Don't let sin have dominion over you. Don't feel like you're kind of some helpless victim that can't resist sin!

Read:

***“...therefore let not sin reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God...”***

What is it that gives me power to not yield my members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin? The faith that I believe that I have died to sin because I was crucified with Christ. If I don't believe that, I will yield to unrighteousness. I will not yield my members to righteousness. Doing right will always be a struggle because I will be resisting everything I'm allowing to live in me.

Read:

***“...but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”***

You're not under law. You're under grace. That means I am righteous through unmerited favor. Jesus...give us the revelation. Romans 3 says there's no one righteous...no not one. There's none good but one. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Paul said in Romans 6:1-2:

***“What shall we say the? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid.”***

We are not supposed to live in sin. We're not supposed to give ourselves to sin. In fact, we're supposed to reckon ourselves dead to sin so we can live unto Christ. But, if we sin, we're not supposed to let it destroy us and defeat us! Because, it's by grace that we're saved through faith, and that not ourselves that any man should boast. Do you know why the Lord Jesus Christ chose to not make you perfect when you got saved? Because if He did, you would end up like Satan before He could get you out of this life. You'd end up taking the credit, being proud and being lost. That's what happened to Lucifer in Heaven. He began to take credit for who he was. He began to take credit for what he was. And, the Lord has left you lower than the angels. He's left you weaker than the angels even though He knew that would mean that you would probably fail occasionally; no matter how hard you tried and wanted to do right, you would fail occasionally. Those failures are not intended to destroy you. Those failures are intended to remind you that without Him you can do nothing, and that you are not righteous because of what you do. You are righteous solely and completely because of Him. Otherwise, when you lay your hands on somebody's head and that devil comes out or that sickness leaves their body, you're going to walk away saying, "Boy, am I something." Flesh is going to glory in His presence. But if you know you didn't deserve that but it's His grace working through you, instead of putting your thumbs in your armpits, you'll raise your hands and say, "Glory to God! Look what the Lord has done!" Which means that God can do anything he wants to through you, and there's no chance of your being lost because you take His glory. So, that rather than feeling like you're an outcast and a reject that nobody wants, you're uniquely a child of God belonging specifically to Him; that He has a perfect plan for just you and that He wants you to give yourself to Him. So, that He can show you what He wants to do through you and for you. If I can only receive from Him that which I feel I've earned or deserve, then I am limiting God.

Here me right now. No human being will be qualified through their own merit to be a part of what God is about to do in this earth. So, anyone who is attempting to earn their place in end-time revival is going to be left out. But only those, and I stress, absolutely only those



who are able to receive their place in end-time revival because of being clothed in His righteousness, only they have any place in end-time revival because they are the only ones God can use who will not be tempted to take the credit and the glory.

Read:

***“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are under the law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.”***

God forbid? This is not a license to sin. Grace is not a license to sin. Righteousness by faith is not a license to sin. 1 John 1, verse 20, says if any of you say you have sinned, you're a liar. You make God a liar. But, if you sin, if you confess your sin, He is faithful and just to forgive you your sins, and cleanse you of all unrighteousness.

1 John 2:1 says:

***“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if ye sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”***

Read:

***“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.”*** (Romans 6:16 continuing)

Let me summarize this just a little bit here. Just give me a moment. What Paul is saying that the reason you and I are tempted by sin and live under guilt and condemnation and defeat isn't because of sin. It's because we have not reckoned ourselves, concluded ourselves, logically and factually to be dead to sin because of being crucified with Christ. Therefore, because we believe we are victims of sin and we are under the dominion of sin, we do not think we can resist sin. But those who know they cannot be what God wants them to be through their own efforts, who by faith trust solely in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and of His sacrificial death; the innocent dying for the guilty, those who trust solely and totally in Him and know that His sacrificial death is death for sin in our place. That that reckoning and that faith which is imputed to us as righteousness no longer makes us subject to sin, and when we reach that place, we find that it is by far easier to do right than it is to do wrong. Whereas, if we're not working in righteousness that's a product of faith, we think it's easier to sin than it is to do right. It is not sin and its power that is at issue here. What's at issue here is who are you trusting for your righteousness? If you are trusting in your own strength and your own ability to do right, you find that you cannot resist sin, and that you find that you're either constantly in the depths of sin or you are constantly attempting to repent. Rather, the Lord says, that if you understand and truly believe He died, the innocent for the guilty, and that you were crucified for Him, this breaks sin's dominion over you. If you are walking in His righteousness and His faith it means that you're going to find, that most of the time it is easier to do right than it is to do wrong.

You're going to find that it's easier to do right. It won't be a strain to pray. You're going to want to pray.

***“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”*** (Philippians 2:13).

You're going to find you are going to want to pray. You're going to find you are going to want to come to church. You're going to find you are going to want to talk to somebody when the door opens for you to witness to them. You're going to want to teach a Bible

study. You're going to want to give. You're going to want to worship instead of sitting with your hands folded and your mouth shut. That's what Paul is trying to say here. In fact, if you read the Book of Romans carefully, this subject that I'm teaching here is the theme of the entire Book of Romans, and Paul covers it in incredible detail. It is worth your time if you're interested at all in studying the Book of Romans verse by verse, and if you have a computer program where you can look at all the words and you're willing to take the time, and you really want to have this down pat, then you'll take the Book of Romans, verse by verse, word by word, and study it and pray about it and take your time through it even if it takes you ten years to get through it. Because this is the focal point of it all, and it is not by accident that God in allowing the Scripture to be put together, put the first Book addressed specifically to the Church following the Book that is the history of the Church, which is the Book of Acts. The main theme of the Book of Romans is righteousness by faith. It is not by accident that that is the case, because if I don't get that first, everything else is going to be a frustration to me. Everything else. Praise God! .

## CHAPTER THREE

# THE LORD, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

We concluded in the last chapter in the middle of Chapter 6 of Romans talking about yielding our members as servants to Christ.

***“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”***

James 2:17:

***“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”***

It is critically important for you and I to understand the necessity or the relationship of works to faith, or in this case we'll discuss scriptural works. Scriptural works are always obedience. Now I want you to hear me please. I don't need a word from God to obey the Word of God. I don't need a personal conviction to obey what the Scripture says, period. I don't need a word from God to obey the Word of God. But, if I'm going to go beyond that...faith comes by hearing, hearing by the Word of God, the *logos* of God; if I'm going to obey the *logos* of God, that is faith. That is obedience. Anything I do for God that I initiate is works attempting to be righteous. Praise God!

The problem that we fall into trying to earn our salvation by works is that we don't understand the difference between works to earn salvation and obedience. We have got to understand that the difference between works by faith and the works attempting to earn righteousness. When I obey God I am earning nothing.

Luke 17:10 says:

***“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”***

When I am obeying the Word of God, however it comes to me: preached, spoken to me in my spirit, gifts of the Spirit, or in written form, I am earning nothing. Obedience earns me nothing. Obedience only demonstrates my faith. I am not trying to work my way to Heaven by obeying the Word of God. So, I'm going to say this again. Listen to me. I don't need a word from God to obey the Word of God. It is always the will of God to obey the Word of God.

But in addition to the principles and the commandments of God in the Scripture, Paul said in Romans 8:14:

***“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”***

How am I led by the Spirit of God? I'm led by the Spirit of God by the voice of God, by the *rhema* of God, the voice of the Spirit.

So then, Romans 10:17:

***“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word (the rhema, the voice) of God.”***

When I'm obeying the written Word of God I'm not earning anything. When I'm obeying the voice of God, I am not earning anything. But when I am initiating any activity for God on my own I'm probably trying to become righteous through my works. For instance, I do not need to pray about whether or not it's the will of God for me to be in church tonight. I don't need a Word from God to come to church tonight. I don't need a word from God to obey the Word of God. I don't need to pray about whether or not I should pay my tithes. I don't need to pray about whether or not it's the will of God to worship tonight and demonstratively so. Now I may not roll in the floor, but I've got Scripture that tells me when I come together that I'm supposed to clap my hands, I'm supposed to raise my hands, I'm supposed to lift up my voice. I don't have to do that by feeling. I do that because the Word of God says to do that. To not do that is disobedience. Hello. That's exactly right.

The problem we talked in the preceding chapter was people trying to earn righteousness by works.

Now, James 2:17 says:

***“Even so faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone.”***

What are the works of faith? When Paul said in Ephesians 2:9 that we are not saved by works lest any man should boast, what works is he talking about? Are those works the same works as stated in James 2:17? No! The works of faith in James, Chapter 2 is any obedience I have for the Word of God whether written or spoken. Obedience to the written Word or the spoken Word is not an effort to earn salvation. It is proof of faith. It is the works of faith that prove I have faith. And it is faith that causes me to have righteousness. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

It is faith that causes me to have righteousness. Faith enables me to have righteousness. But in Ephesians 2, when he says that salvation is not of works lest any man should boast, he is talking about the works of a person initiating certain religious activity with the thought in mind that this is going to gain or achieve any kind of or favor with God. And, the tricky thing here is this: it's the same action, but the motive behind that action determines whether it is accepted or rejected. If I am praying because God said pray, the Word of God says pray without ceasing; I'm praying because the Word of God says do that or because the Spirit of the Lord is bidding me to pray; I'm not praying with the attitude that I'm going to earn something from God, I'm going to pray and God's going to do something because I'm praying, it's acceptable. But If I am praying with the attitude that I'm doing this because I've got to do this to get anything from God, and by praying, by putting in my time, something's going to happen, then that is righteousness by works.

There is a synonym for righteousness by works which is...self-righteousness. Self-righteousness is righteousness accomplished by works. The denominational world, not understanding that and not understanding what we're preaching, they believe when we preach that you have to repent and be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost to be saved, that we are preaching salvation by works; that is wrong! We're preaching that if you have faith, that faith without works is dead, and dead faith doesn't accomplish anything, that if you really have faith, it will produce works and those works will be demonstrative of the fact that you have faith which is what enables you to have righteousness.

Read:

James 2:18 says:

***“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.”***

Hello? You can say I've got faith but have no works. But it is scriptural to expect that if a person says they have faith to require or expect to see their works that proves their faith. And if your attitude is right with that expectation, it is not judgmentalism. "You're judging me." No, no more than if you're judging a tree if your attitude is right with your approach with it, no more than looking at a tree that's claiming to be an apple tree and not finding any apples on it.

Read:

James 2:19 says:

***"Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?"***

Faith without works is dead. Am I earning anything? Ten thousand times no.

Read:

James 2:20 says:

***"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"***

Wait! Did Abraham get up one day and say, "I really want to make sure God gives me what He's promised me so I'm going to take my son out and offer him." Is anybody getting the picture here? That's why I've been trying to teach here the last few weeks; giving through the gift of giving; giving what God says to you. Because if I give one bit less than God says, I'm disobedient. If I give one cent more than God says, I'm trying to impress God or obligate God. But if I give specifically what God says give, I'm giving in



obedience, therefore, I'm giving in faith, and it is not an attempt to earn or deserve anything. It is simply an expression of the fact that I truly believe God and am submitted to Him.

Read:

James 2:21 says:

***“Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was made perfect?”***

Faith made with his works, and by works was made perfect or completed. From faith to faith.

I Peter 1:9 says:

***“Receiving the end of your faith...”***

“Receiving the end of your faith.” Now notice this please. We read Romans 1:17 that talked about the righteousness of God as revealed from faith to faith. Then, we read in James, Chapter 2 that faith is made perfect by the works of obedience. And then we find in I Peter 1:9 that we receive the end, or the completion of our faith. Completed faith is what saves me. It is not profession of faith that a person makes when they join a church. It's not beginning faith that saves someone, It is finished, completed or perfected faith. He is the author and the finisher of our faith. And it is my faith that is accounted for me as righteousness. One brother came up to me last night after I was through and said, “It can't be this easy.” It is this easy! I am not saved by what I do! I am saved because I trust God. I believe God. That faith is accounted for righteousness. But, the point these verses are making is, if I believe God there are certain works that will accompany or follow or be the expression of my faith. They will not be done in an effort to impress God or to coerce God

or obligate God. They are done simply as a natural, and I'm using this word in a positive sense here, as a normal flow and by-product of the kind of faith that produces righteousness. They flow from faith. Faith doesn't have to work at it. Faith doesn't have to strain to produce it. They flow from faith. Everybody here say: flow. And they do.

Now, I'm going to say this. I don't mean it to sound quite so absolute. I'm just making a point. But if your obedience is strained, that's a pretty good indicator that you're doing your obedience through your own strength and not from faith. It's also a pretty good indicator that you're trying to be righteous by what you do rather than your faith. Praise God. I just thought you needed a minute to think about that.

Read:

James 2:23

***“And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.***

The word, *impute*; do you know what it means? It means to account in the record as if it was one and the same. Do you understand that that word literally means that when God sees faith on your record, He reads it as righteousness. When God looks at your life and sees faith, it is imputed as or accounted or credited the same as righteousness. The benefit you get from faith with God is credited as if it were righteousness to the point that it becomes righteousness in God's mind. When God looks at you and He sees faith in you, what He really sees is righteousness!

Let's start back up a few verses at Verse 21, where it started talking about Abraham.

***“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?”***

There's that word, justify again. Remember: justification is the process. What is the product? The product is righteousness. Abraham was justified by works. What were his works? They were not works he initiated. They were the works of obedience to the Word of God whether written or spoken. Therefore, what he was doing was God's idea. When you do what you do because it's God's idea, it is faith not self-righteousness. When you do what you do because it's your idea, it is self-righteousness and not faith. Same action. It could be giving, paying tithes, worshiping, witnessing, coming to church, living right, whatever it may be. If you're doing it because God says do it, and you're wanting to do it because God says to do it, and you're obeying what God says, and you're obeying what God says, it is faith; therefore it is accounted as righteousness. If you're doing it because it's your idea to do it and you're instigating it, it is not righteousness because it is not faith. It is self-righteousness.

Verse 22 says:

***“Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?”***

By works, faith was made perfect...completed... brought to fruition...brought to maturity. All of those are definitions of that word.

Read:

***“And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”***

Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness or as if it was righteousness. It was credited to his account the exact same way that you would credit righteousness. It was accounted as being equivalent to righteousness. My Lord! And he was called the Friend of God. The Friend of God! I want to be the Friend of God.

What do I have to do to be the Friend of God? Give my body to be burned? Give all possessions to the poor? Understand all mysteries and all knowledge and speak in tongues all the time? Is that what I've got to do? No!!! Ten thousand times no!!! I just have to trust Him, believe what He says and know that He's trustworthy, regardless of what it looks like and how it feels; I just do what I do because He says do it! That makes me God's Friend! I'm not trying to earn anything, because when I'm trying to earn it, I'm trying to take away something from God that belongs to Him. If I'm trying to earn it, then I'm trying to get the glory. But, if I'm simply doing it because of who He is and how good He is, then I'm doing it because He's righteous, He gets all the glory, and when He gets all the glory, He gives me His righteousness.

Even though He (Abraham) had sinned in the past and doubted God in the past, it didn't matter. This had happened after He doubted God and had Ishmael. Did anybody here that? Did you get that? “But do you know what I did yesterday?” Well I don't know. Let's look over here on your account. Well, your account says righteousness from yesterday. No. No. No. No! You don't understand what I did yesterday. You don't understand how I blew it yesterday. You had better check that record a little closer. Let's see your name is... and your record yesterday says: righteousness. How can that be? I had a bad day yesterday. How can the record show righteousness for yesterday? How can it be? Well,

I don't know. How are you doing today? Well, I'm trusting God today. Have you had a great day today? Well, No it's been a little difficult, but I've trusted God through it. Do you mean that my faith today affects what my record shows as far back as you want to look?

Boy, you all missed that one. Whew! Flesh dies hard doesn't it? We come to church and say, "I've had a rough day. I'm struggling and I'm barely hanging on to my salvation, and I don't know how I'm going to make it. My...It's difficult living for God." And then you're told, "Well that's fine, but do you believe God?" "Oh yeah." "Well, you're righteous!" "Well, I can't accept that. I can't accept that. I just don't deserve that. I've got to do better to get that. And, I'll let God give it to me once it's a reward. We'll have a reward ceremony, and He can call my name, bring me up front and say, 'I bestow upon you this mantle of righteousness because you have earned it.'" I could ask a stupid question, and I will. Anyone who has ever spent one day, where you have truly earned any righteousness, let me see your hand. You see...that's' the joke. I persist in wanting to win righteousness but I've never achieved it even one day. Not even one time.

Continuing with verse 24:

***"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Like also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."***

Now, we'll go to Romans 6 where I left off last night. We're talking about yielding your members as instruments of righteousness. Let me read, starting with verse 12.

***“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield you members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”***

Listen now. This is really important. Please. You've got to get this. He didn't say use your members as instruments of righteousness. The words are carefully chosen. He said **yield** your members as instruments of righteousness. Do you have any idea what the difference is? If he said use your members as instruments of righteousness, he would have been implying that it would be something I was initiating, that I was doing, that I chose to do, and that I was accomplishing. When he said that I am to **yield** my members as instruments of unrighteousness he is implying that the righteousness or the works that I'm about to do which will prove my faith which is accredited for righteousness, that I did not initiate those things, that it wasn't my idea, nor my power with which those things would be done, that my only task would be because I trust him, that I would simply give myself to cooperation with Him. You've got to get this. You've got to get this somehow. Jesus help us.

If what I'm doing is initiated by God even in His written Word or the voice of His Spirit to me, then He is initiating it, it is His idea, He will always empower to be done what he initiates. All that is necessary for me to do is to choose to cooperate with what is His idea, what He is initiating, what He is empowering to be done. When I do that, what I am attempting to do becomes easy to do. But, if I am attempting to do what I am doing **for** God, because I am trying to earn something, or be good...the rich young ruler came to Jesus and said, “Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said, “Well you know the commandments and He listed them off”, and the rich young ruler sighed with relief and said, “I've kept all of these since my youth up.” “Whew. I've got that down.” The

rich young ruler said, “Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said, “You know there’s none good but one.” Now wait a minute. That guy didn’t believe that. Because when he was told to keep the commandments and he said that he had done that from his youth up, he was telling us what he believed: “I am good!” That’s what he was saying. “I am good!” But there is none good but one.

It’s like that old joke. I don’t remember the details but basically things are going wrong, and the guy says, “Why me? Why is this happening to me?! I’ve been good.” What does that mean? What does it mean when parents say to their kids, “be good now.” If that child doesn’t do exactly what you’ve said, they are bad. **Be good** means you do what I say. You don’t do what I say, you are bad. Is it any wonder why we sit and struggle with God so much? We’re trying to **be good** for our Heavenly Father and when we blow it we are **bad** little kids. And the very fact that our Heavenly Father is able to take our simple faith and account that as if we were good, we’re not willing to take that. No way, God. You can’t do that. You can’t make me good just because I trust you. I’ve got to earn it. I’ve got to be good by what I’m doing.

This is an incredibly liberating message but none of us is acting like it. Isn’t it amazing how hard it is to be told you can’t do anything to be saved? You have to accept His righteousness by faith. And we’re all sitting here going...white knuckles on the sheets...”How can I do that? I can’t let go!” You “ain’t” swimming baby ‘till you let go of the side of the pool. You may be in the water, but you “ain’t” swimming. And there is lot of you in the pool but haven’t let go of the side. Hello? I’ve got to be able to have to have something to hang on to. I’m not willing to be out in the middle of this water and trust that I’m not going down. I’ve got to have something to hang on to. We’re not going to let go of that. The side of the pool is our safety factor. Well, if I can’t be righteous by any other way, then I’ll be righteous by coming to church, paying my tithes, worshipping, dressing right, talking right, living right, witnessing. Do I need to go on? Are those things wrong? Yeah, if they’re done for the purpose of earning something you can’t earn. If they are the normal flow of faith that is trusting solely in Jesus Christ which has made you righteous; if they are

the by-product of that faith, they are pure and righteous and acceptable in the sight of God. But if they are done in an effort to hide what's on the inside and to somehow earn a place with God that you do not feel like you are presently in... My God!

Did you ever read those signs...my wife really got a Word from God when she married me...you've heard this before. She was riding down the road and saw that sign that said "Get Right With God!" It worked for her. That's bad isn't it? What a tough audience tonight.

Can you tell me what it means when you say, and I know that all of you have said it at least one time in your life, "I'm struggling and I've got to get right with God." What you did was abbreviate the word. I'm going to say the full word, and here's what you're really saying. "I'm struggling. I really need to get **righteous** with God." Now, here is the multi-billion dollar question. This is the question that if you answer it right, heaven is the prize. If you've got to get right with God, how do you do that? Wow! I like this one. Come on now! Well, let's see. I've got to get right with God so I need to go pray for at least an hour. I need to go read my Bible. I need to get back to going to service regularly. I need to catch up on my tithes. I need to... You might do one or all of those things once you get right with God, but you won't do any of those things to get right. The only way you can get right or get righteous with God again is to give up on all your efforts to be right, trust in Him totally and completely for any good or righteousness that's in you. But when we talk about getting right with God we talk about all the stuff we're going to do to try get back in the good graces of God. You can't get right or get righteous with God by what you do! Unless...it is the renewing of your faith. The only thing that would get you right again with God or to get you righteous with God again is the renewal... of... your... faith. There are actually people sitting here today that believe that if they don't pray a certain number of hours every day, or read a certain amount of their Bible every day, or do this or do that or do the other every day, that they are in trouble with God. And there is nothing wrong with the amount of prayer that they want to pray, and there is nothing wrong with the amount of Bible they want to read. There is nothing wrong with the amount of activities they want to participate



in. It's the attitude or the approach with which they are doing them. They are doing them because they are required activities to be right with God. Friend, if you're not right before you do those things, you won't be one bit more right after you do them. Some of you have the problem with this because what I'm preaching is in the Book and what you're practicing is not.

Romans 4 starting with Verse 1 says:

***“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God.”***

Whoa, hold on! Quit! Wait! Stop!! James just said he was justified by works. James 2 just said that Abraham was justified by works. Paul just said that if he had been justified by works, he could have gloried. Ugh! That proves it! Contradiction in the Bible! Turn out the lights and let's all go home and buy us a big TV! Sign up for cable! And all those nasty channels too, because it don't make no difference! The Bible has contradicted itself! Well, fortunately I don't see anybody running out the door, so you must be waiting for the punch line.

This is exactly what I'm talking about. The works talked about in James 2 are not the same works about talked in Romans 4! The works talked about in James 2 are works that were initiated by God that Abraham was simply doing by faith because God said, "Give me your son." The works talked about in Romans 4 were works that Abraham would have been trying to initiate himself. Even though they would have been spiritual things; he would have been the initiator of them. He would have been doing them for the purpose of being righteous with God, and he didn't do it that way, because if he would have done it he would have glorifying. He would have gotten the glory instead of God, and no flesh is going to glory in His presence.

So read it again:

***“For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”***

It was counted unto him for righteousness. It was counted the same as righteousness.

I hope I'm not offending anyone. If it does, forgive me, but I rebuke the spirit of Catholicism. I command you to be set free from this spirit of Catholicism...the idea that you can earn your way to heaven. I bind that spirit in the name of Jesus! In the name of Jesus. I don't remember who told me this...I talked to several people today and I don't remember who it was said about, so if it was said about you, it was said in a positive context, and if I'm repeating something "out of school," please forgive me. Somebody was telling me today that somebody's grandmother who was Catholic spent the last five years of her life praying that that could be her purgatory so that she wouldn't have to purgatory but straight to heaven. Can you imagine a precious elderly lady spending the last five years of her life in deep, earnest and fervent prayer, that those last five years of her life could be counted as purgatory so she could go straight to heaven? And some of you have brought that in here because that spirit even affects the Protestant churches, and whether you were Catholic or not, you brought that here. And, because you think we preach Acts 2:38, and we preach One God, and we preach holiness, you think we're preaching the same thing. And we're not even preaching anything in the same "ballpark." We're not preaching for you to do any of that stuff through your own strength! We're not preaching for you to do any of that stuff for the purpose of pleasing God. It is your faith that pleases God! You do all that stuff as an expression of a faith that pleases God! I rebuke that Catholic spirit! And if you're Catholic in here and I didn't spot you, please forgive me. I don't mean to be offensive to you, but you can't earn your way to heaven.

Catholics don't repent...they do penance. If you think that they are the same thing, you don't have a "clue." That's not even in the same universe. Penance is the attempt of a person to pay for their own sins. Repentance is the admission that you can't do anything but to accept the sacrificial blood of the Lord, Jesus Christ and His death on the cross...Period!!!

Continuing with Romans 4:4:

***"Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt."***

In other words, if you do works, and your righteousness comes because you come to church..."Lord, you're supposed to give us a mighty harvest because we've been coming to church for six months...we've had a prayer chain going on for five months... we've been praying on Saturdays... Lord...we've been witnessing to people...God you ought to be just absolutely blowing the top out of this thing right now! What is your problem?!" God is in debt to no man, including Antioch! God is in debt to none of us. If we've done any of this to put Him in debt, we have "missed the boat." If we've done this because it was the instruction of the Lord, if that was direction of God and you obeyed that from the heart because God said it, then it is faith...and your faith is accounted for righteousness, and God will give us what we've been believing for because we won't take the credit. We'll know it came from Him. But if you think we've worked and somehow put God in debt to us..."I go to church...Father I thank you that I'm not like other men... I go to church twice on Sunday...I pray in a prayer chain...I pray at church on Saturday...I'm teaching Bible studies on the rest of my free time...I give ten percent of my money in tithes...I give to missions...I give to every offering that's taken...You're just lucky You have me...I'm just glad I'm not like other men." I recognize that prayer from someplace in the Bible. I recognize that one.

I just figured out what I feel here tonight. Some of you feel cheated, because I'm standing here telling you that everything you've done just accounted for nothing. All of that gut wrenching intercession didn't earn you one "brownie point" with God. If it wasn't a product of your faith and His work through you, it was nothing...zero...zip! Every meal you missed in fasting...every day you didn't meat...every minute, every hour you prayed...is of zero value whatsoever if you were trying to obligate God to do something. God only responds to faith. He does not respond to debt.

Continuing with Romans 4:5:

***"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."***

"Wait a minute! This isn't fair God! You're going to do all this for them that don't do a thing?! Why those are the people that I've been looking down my nose at for years!" See there again...you missed the point. When he said ***worketh not***, he is not talking about those that are disobedient to the Word. He's talking about those who aren't doing anything for God. They're simply letting God do it through them. All of my life around Pentecost I've heard the expression: *live for God...work for God*. What they should have kept on preaching was: earn your righteousness...righteousness for sale right here! Whoa! You've got to get this. This is standing between this and God. Pentecost for years has preached something unscriptural: that you can do anything for God. God doesn't need you to do a thing for Him. You can't earn anything from God. You can't add anything to God. That's why what we do must be done because it's written in the Word or because He has spoken it to us. He is the initiator. If he initiates the Word, He empowers the obedience to the Word.

***"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."*** Philipians 2:13

The Holy Ghost has come to this world to convince the world of His righteousness...to convince us of righteousness...to convince us that we are righteous not because of what we do but because of our faith which allows God to do stuff through us. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Praise God!

Continuing with Romans 4:6-7:

***“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.”***

Did you get it that? Do you remember what I said in the preceding chapter? The hypocrite's got it right! He understands what has to be done. The sin's got to be covered up. You don't come in here parading your wrong. You come in here covered. The difference between the righteous person and the hypocrite is the hypocrite comes in here hiding his sin behind a cloak of his own making, and the righteous person comes in here hiding inside of the righteousness of Jesus Christ! Maybe in my weakness and stupidity I got myself in a jam today and I told a big fat lie! Maybe I told ten big fat lies because when you tell one big lie you have to tell a bigger fat one to cover up the last big fat one and so on. Then you walk in here feeling like absolutely the biggest scum of the earth because you're supposed to be a Christian and a truth teller, and you have just blown it big time! And so what you really want to do...you know that scarlet "A" they used to put on adulteresses...the scarlet letter?...Some of us want to come in here with signs saying, "I told lies today. Here I am!" Others of you want to come with signs saying, "I've been thinking lustful thoughts all day. God can't do anything through me tonight!" And, do you know what God wants you to walk in here with? How do you like this robe? Do you like this robe? Do you know what our problem is? That smacks of hypocrisy. It's only hypocrisy if you did the covering. It is faith which is accounted for righteousness if it's the Lord's covering!! But the real deal is...you're not supposed to wear that robe to church. You're supposed to wear that robe all of the time!! You're supposed to wear that robe to

work. “Well, I don’t want to walk around acting pious in front of everybody.” The only people that act pious are those that aren’t. And the ones who aren’t pious are the hypocrites that have covered their sin with a covering of their own making; scratchy fig leaves no less. But if you’ve been covered by the righteousness of Jesus Christ because of faith that is accounted for that righteousness, you are not a hypocrite. You are trusting in the shed blood and the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord, Jesus Christ, who is at work in your life daily, because He promised: He that hath begun this good work in you, shall perform it.

You know, the people that have a good day want to sneak their shirt open and show that red “S” on their chest. “Hey...do you see this? Don’t tell anybody... because I’m really Super-Saint! I’ve had a good day today. I showed up for my prayer chain time. I’ve talked in tongues the whole time. I even moaned and groaned a little bit. Check it out. Yes! God is duly impressed with me today and you ought to be too if you are spiritual at all. You’d discern what’s under this cloak of humility. Super-Saint! Super Shallow that is. That’s why Jesus said, when you do your alms, do them in secret, because if you do them on the street corner you have your reward. But we pray in public and we see people laying hands on them and everything. Yeah, and if while you’re laying hands on them, you are concerned about whether everybody’s checking you out, and duly impressed with what you’re doing...wrong!

I preached a conference in England in November a year ago, and maybe you don’t believe this, but in England there are some shouting people. God had given me some direction to preach on pleasing Him and on what it meant to please Him and on being dead. The night before I taught this particular lesson, my wife and I were seated down on the front row for the guest speakers, and the place was going nuts all over the place. I didn’t feel like doing any of that. Plus, I wanted to have a little illustration for my message for the next day so I just stood there. I got blasted from the pulpit at least eight or nine times. Every time I was told to clap my hands, I did. Every time I was told to jump, I did. Every time I was told to dance, I did. But if I wasn’t told from the pulpit to do it, I didn’t do a thing, unless God told

me, and for some reason that night, He wasn't telling me to do anything. So, when I taught the next day, I just simply referred to that. I said, I conducted a little experiment last night, and I found out that in the service last night it was much more important to people that I do what they were doing rather than whatever God may want me to do. I wasn't invited back the next year. It wasn't my problem. I told them the truth. I said I obeyed the authority of the pulpit and everything the pulpit told me to do, I did. But, I didn't do anything else just to fit. And I didn't.

But friend...I got whipped pretty bad for it. I would dance all night if the Holy Ghost told me to do and everybody else was sitting there sleeping. But if the whole place is dancing and the Holy Ghost hasn't told me to do it, I'm going to stand there watching you. I don't care how good the music is. And, if you dance because of the music here or anyplace, you're carnal. If you dance on feeling rather than the instruction of the Holy Ghost, you're carnal. If you dance or jump or jump or shout because other people are doing it, you're carnal. Now, I'll go a little bit farther with you. If the Lord is telling you to dance and nobody else is and you act like everybody else, you're carnal. You're also unrighteous.

Continue reading Romans 4: 8-10:

***“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that the faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.”***

Hello? Abraham became the father of believers before he ever became a Hebrew by circumcision. Before he ever entered into the covenant of God specifically for the Hebrews through the sign of circumcision, Abraham became the father of believers because his faith pre-dated circumcision, so that he could be the father of all believers to both the circumcised and the uncircumcised, both to the Jew and the Greek. Because

righteousness is not of the law, righteousness is of faith. Get this. Are you ready? Even during the Old Testament period of the law the only way to be righteous was by faith. David experienced it. David believed it, and David preached it, and he smack dab in the middle of the Old Testament law.

Righteousness by faith has always been God's plan. Here me please. Adam and Eve were saved by righteousness, which came by faith. Enoch was saved because of being righteous, because he had faith that pleased God. Seth was saved because he had faith that pleased God and was accounted for righteousness. Samuel was saved because he had faith that pleased God and was accounted for righteousness. Peter, James, John, Paul were all saved because they had faith that pleased God and was accounted for righteousness. The only thing that changed from Adam to Seth to Enoch to Noah to Moses to Samuel to David to John the Baptist to Peter to Paul were the works that God required in different dispensations as a sign or demonstration of faith which was accounted for righteousness. The plan of salvation has always been the exact same plan. Now, God has given different rewards in addition to salvation for the different requirements in each one of those periods of time. That's why He said to whom much is given, much is required. But the people who will be saved out of the Great Tribulation, will be saved because they have faith which is accounted for righteousness. The people saved after the coming of the Lord when Jesus Christ reigns on the earth for a thousand years will be saved by faith which is accounted for righteousness. God's plan of salvation from Adam until the last man is saved or lost has been, is, and always will be faith which is accounted for righteousness. But, in order for Noah to have that faith, he had to prove it by hearing God and building an Ark. In order for Enoch to please God, he had to walk with God. In order for Moses to please God he had to do the things God told him to do concerning the law. In order for Samuel to please God, he had to do what God told him to do. In order for David to be saved, he had to do what the law said and the other things God told him to do. In order for Peter, James and John and the Church to be saved, even though we are saved by righteousness which is accounted as faith, we had to repent, be baptized and receive the Holy Ghost. We are not doing something different than anybody else did as far as the ultimate plan of



salvation. It is the same for every man...faith which is accounted for righteousness. But in every period or dispensation of time there have been different things that God has required each period of time to do in order to prove they had the faith which was accounted for righteousness.

Now, in Romans 4: 11:

***“And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, through they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.”***

Notice please: it says, “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised...”

What is our seal?

Colossians 2:10 says:

***“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”***

Abraham's seal of righteousness which was the sign of circumcision for the New Testament church is water baptism and the quickening of the infilling of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. No one during the law was a recipient of the covenants of law without the sign of circumcision. No one has righteousness by faith during the Church age without the sign of New Testament circumcision which is the seal of our righteousness which is of faith which is water baptism in the name of Jesus, and the quickening or the infilling of the Holy Ghost.

Same righteousness...a product of the same faith, but in the Church age he uses a different sign or seal compared to the one he used in Abraham's day. Same faith...same righteousness...same salvation...we're not going to Hell, but the expression of that faith; the sign of it...the seal of it, is being buried with Him in baptism and resurrected with Him with the infilling of the Holy Ghost.

Here it is...God doesn't have one pattern for one people and one pattern for another. It's always been the same pattern. Isn't that awesome to know that everybody that's going to go to heaven is going to go to heaven by the same plan...righteousness which is a product of faith? And in each, what I term dispensation, the Church age, the period of promise, human government, conscience, innocence...in each one of those periods God had a different sign of righteousness. But it was the same faith and the same righteousness. That's why Hebrews 11 talks about faith like it does. By faith Seth...by faith Enoch...by faith Noah...by faith Abraham...by faith Isaac, by faith David...by faith all those other names...by faith, by faith...it's the same faith. That's why Paul could say in Hebrew 11:6:

***“but without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”***

Hebrews 11:1 says:

***“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”***

And if I believe God, it's accounted to me for righteousness! That's why Paul could say in Titus 3:5:

***“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”***

Being baptized in water is a work. Receiving the Holy Ghost is a work. But, he divides the works into two categories: the works of righteousness which we have done; which we have initiated; which we have attempted to do to earn salvation, and the works of righteousness which we do at His instigation; by His inspiration and instruction. He divides them. They are different. One is a sign and a seal and a proof of our righteousness. The other is proof of our unrighteousness and our attempt to earn righteousness through our own efforts and to deserve what God has for us.

Is this making any sense? Have I lost you so long ago? Is it just so heavy that you don't know what to do with it? This is heavy stuff. Some of you have sat here and in your mind you really do believe Acts 2:38, but in your heart you're hoping that it's not true. Whew! I just hit the bull's eye dead center! Your mind says it and sees, but your heart's hoping it's not true...hoping that some way it's not right...hoping that some way God's got a back-door for the good people. He does...there's none good but one. And He's got a back-door for Him but He didn't have to come that way. He said, “get thee behind me Satan.” And if the only one that's good had to come through the front-door, so do you and I. He was so good He became the door.

We have a few people here of Jewish descent. God has blessed us for them to be here. They have a double blessing on them. They have a natural covenant and a spiritual covenant. And I don't mean to be crude with this but you ask them the view that the Jewish community would have toward a person that says they're Jewish but they're uncircumcised. Friend, I don't care who your momma and your daddy is...if you're not circumcised...too bad for you. Again, at the expense of being crude, the Germans never questioned, never considered it being difficult at all to determine if a man was a Jew or not, because it was not a common practice before or during World War II for Gentile males to ever be circumcised. So, if you were circumcised, you had to be a Jew. But, their difficulty came in trying to determine whether a woman was a Jew or not. And there were some that weren't Jews who were sent to the gas chambers as Jews, and there were some that were Jews that got away because there was no such sign for the female. I don't care what your birth certificate reads my friend, if you're not circumcised you have no part in the covenant. You could be a direct descendant of David himself and have no part of the natural promises of God to the Jews if you're not circumcised.

And I'm trying to be delicate, but at the same time make a point here, because you can say all you want that you are a Christian, but friend without the sign and the seal of circumcision; spiritual New Testament circumcision, you "ain't." I didn't say you ain't saved. I said you ain't! I can prove that. Ishmael was not circumcised. And when God came for Abraham to offer Isaac, He said, "bring me your son, your only son Isaac." Ishmael wasn't dead. When God looked down, Abraham didn't even have but one son. He didn't say bring me the son that I gave you. He said, "bring me your son, your only son." It's in there...He said O-N-L-Y son. Bring me your only son Isaac. Ishmael didn't even exist. Using the vernacular I've already used...Ishmael ain't! He was living and breathing someplace...having wives and kids, but in God's sight, it was as if he didn't even exist. Hello?

You know, I get a little concerned when I preach straight Word stuff that I know you know is in there (the Bible), and you look at me like, "I don't want to hear that. I don't want to hear that!" It's in the Book. I didn't write it. I know you think I'm old. I'm not that old. I didn't write that. I wasn't even there when it was translated. I'm just reading it. It's there. Are you going to persist with your ideas and opinions when it's there so plainly and directly?

Even Jesus said He had to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness. What did he mean: fulfill all righteousness?

Let's go to Romans, Chapter 2:28

***"For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: But he is Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.***

Now, we're talking New Testament now. What's he talking about? He's talking about being buried with Him is baptism. He's talking about being resurrected with Him in the power of the Holy Ghost. There are Israelis today, but as long as the Church is on the earth, there are no Jews born naturally. That's why God's going to take the Church off of the earth and turn it back to the natural Jew because He cannot have two Jews on the earth at the same time; heirs of the promise. Romans, chapters 9, 10, and 11 teach that exact thing. That's why he said blindness and slumber come to the Jew for awhile because the nation of Israel is not Jewish in God's sight for this period of time for the Church age. That's why I'm not going to be here in that seven year period that we mistakenly call the Great Tribulation. It's only the last three and a half years. That seven year period is called in the Old Testament the time of Jacob's trouble. It's also called Daniel's Seventieth Week. That doesn't have anything to do with me. That has to do with the natural Jew. And it's in that seven year period that God is going to open their eyes and take away their blindness and restore the natural promises that He made to them. That's why when He comes back...do you know

what the second coming is really going to be? It's not coming for the Church. We're going up in the rapture which is the invisible part of the beginning of the seven year period. Jesus is coming back with the Church at the end of the seven year period to spare the nation of Israel from annihilation to fulfill the covenant that He's renewed to them during that seven year period. And at the end of that when He comes back, He's going to establish His personal physical throne on the earth in the nation of Jerusalem, and He's going to rule and reign over the earth from the physical city of Jerusalem for a thousand years. And we're going to be here in glorified bodies ruling and reigning with Him. The second coming of Jesus Christ is not for the Church, it's with the Church for the sparing of the Jewish people from annihilation by the forces of the anti-Christ. We will have already gotten out of here before then; before the seven year of Jacob's trouble, or before Daniel's seventieth week starts which is one and the same thing. And I just realized that some of you don't have a clue about what I mean by Daniel's Seventieth Week.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye Heavenly Host. Praise Jesus who is Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Ha Ha Ha! You wondered how I was going to get out of that one.

I was thrilled to death today. I sat down and talked to a precious young lady who has been coming to our school for several years. Her parents go to another church. And she got baptized a couple of weeks ago. And she wants to come here to go to church, and she said, "Pastor, what is the main doctrine of this church?" I never had anyone ever ask me that. I've got so many main doctrines, I couldn't tell you which one is the main doctrine. If it's doctrine, it's all main to me. But I understood what she was trying to ask, so I tried to show her the difference between our plan of salvation and our God and what she had been taught. And I watched that sweet young lady sit there as I talked just a few minutes about who Jesus was, who God was, and who the trinity was and I watched light come into her eyes. That was the neatest thing. I watched it. She said, "I see that." I said, "It's simple isn't it?" She said, "It really is. I never understood that before."

Some of you can't figure me out. I don't care how much we care about this stuff. I love it!

I love this stuff! Do you love it? There is nothing in this world like the Word of God. It's so simple and yet it's more intriguing than the most advanced jig-saw puzzle you've ever seen. It's so neat when you're putting a jig-saw puzzle together; when you finally find the piece out of that stack you've been looking for, and you fit them together and they go perfectly together because they were made to go together. And you say, "Wow! Look at that! There really was a piece that fit there!" And you put a few more pieces together and the picture begins to be revealed and you say, "Look. I wonder where this part fits together in this overall picture. I like to start with the outside and then fill in the middle. I know some of you can't believe that I've ever done a jig-saw puzzle. This is flesh. I sleep in a bed. I eat real food. Hello?

That's so neat to do that. That's just like the Word of God is. When you get an understanding of the Word of God, there is nothing in this world like studying the Word. And when those pieces fit together for you...you see that's what just thrills me to death...I hope that you get it...I want you to get it. Sometimes I like to mix up the pieces and jumble them all up and start all over again, just to make sure it really went together like that. And when I put it together the second, third, or fourth time, I say, "Wow! This really is neat! It really does fit like that!"

There are no mysteries in this Book, except to the unsaved. To the saved, everything in this Book is a secret waiting to be revealed to you if you want it. I'm going to say that one again. The only mysteries in this Book are those that the unsaved see because they have no clue what they mean. But to the saved, this Book is simply full of wonderful secrets that God will show you for yourself if you will seek Him and love Him and desire Him. And getting it for yourself or being able to tell somebody else about it and watching them get it; I've never really been able to decide which is absolutely the more awesome of the two: when you get it for yourself for the first time, or when you're talking about it and you see the "light" come on in somebody else's eyes and they get it. I honestly know which is greater, but I sure love them both! And I'm not willing to give up either one of them. Praise God!

I need to share this one more time: Was Abraham righteous because he believed he was righteous? Here me now...Was Abraham righteous because he believed he was righteous? No. Abraham was righteous because he believed the promise of God. What was the promise of God? It didn't have anything to do with the righteousness. It had to do with what God told Abraham He was going to do. But because Abraham believed what God said He was going to do, his faith and what God said He was going to do, give him a son, give him land, be a blessing, all that kind of stuff, that faith was accounted for righteousness. Don't you understand that when God has given us a promise for revival, what He's really done is given us an opportunity to demonstrate faith for righteousness? Don't you understand that if I believe, no matter what it looks like and feels like this very moment; if I believe what He said is true and there's going to be a revival, it's faith that is counted as righteousness. I'm believing it regardless of what it looks like. That is righteousness. God can find people to pray, but He has a hard time finding people to believe. God can find people who will give, but it's hard to find people who will believe. He said, "nevertheless, when the son of man comes shall he find faith given on the earth?...No...shall he find praying on the earth?...No...shall he find people going to church on the earth? That's not what He was looking for. Shall He find faith on the earth! He can't work unless He has someone to work through who believes Him. The fact that a person does all of this religious stuff, and that's all that it is if it's not done by faith;

***“faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God,”***

then it's not faith and God can't work except through somebody that believes. So, therefore, He has given us a promise of revival, and by believing the promise, not producing the promise...believing the promise, that faith is counted...as...righteousness!

It can be that personal. When God gives us a promise, we demonstrate whether or not we're righteous by whether or not we choose to believe the promise regardless of how impossible it looks. Whether a promise comes to pass or not doesn't matter. You are righteous just for believing it. Don't you understand? God can do it in a heartbeat. It's not



hard for him to do it. But He wants to know if you'll believe Him regardless of how impossible it looks. You don't have to produce it, just believe it. Because circumstances have prevented it from being easily done, so if it gets done, He'll have to do it. So therefore you are righteous just because you believed what he said no matter how impossible it looks. So with all that failure and unworthiness that you feel, you are made worthy and you are made righteous just because God said it and you say, "Lord... I don't know how this can come to pass but Lord if you said you'd do it, I believe you are able and I just want you to know that. I believe it!" Praise God!

I'm just expected to sit back and trust what He says and believe it. And those of you that sit back when a Man of God who has done his best to sincerely seek God and is doing his best in all honesty and integrity to try to the best of his ability to say what God says, those of you who sit back and give your "thumbs up or thumbs down" as if you have a right to judge the Word of God...But what if it doesn't come to pass? Do you understand that if you will simply believe the Word, the coming to pass part is God's problem. But if you believe the Word, it is your faith that's accounted for righteousness. It's not your responsibility to judge. Whether or not it comes to pass is God's problem. It's my responsibility and my need to believe it because that is the means whereby I have righteousness; not because of what the man says, but because of what God says.

***"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."***

And if you believe God, it is accounted as righteousness!

Just believe God and leave the rest to him. I've never yet questioned a pilot when I got on a plane. "What's your certification, Sir? "Let me see the flight plan you filed. How much sleep have you had recently? Have you drunk any alcohol?" No Sir. I have boarded a plane, gone back to the seat I was assigned to, and fastened that seatbelt and entrusted myself to God. And in this illustration, I have entrusted my life to that pilot and the airlines that hired him. If I can't do that, I'm not going to get on a plane. Otherwise, you live in total

fear. I don't know the man that's flying the plane tonight that's taking my son to Africa. I don't know him. I've never met him, but I've got to trust him because what's precious to me is on that plane, and I'm trusting God, trusting the people that prepared that airplane, and the men that are flying it and the controllers on the ground that are guiding it to get what's precious to me there and back safely. That's faith. I don't have to fly the plane. I just have to get in the seat and fasten the seatbelt. Hello? Is anybody listening to me? And some of you are so fraught with worry and fear and discouragement because you think believing is climbing on a plane and getting in the seat of a cockpit, trying to fly a plane off the ground that you have never had any training to fly. And you think that's faith. You think it's all up to you and your ability to pilot of plane you've never had any training in. That's not faith. Faith's isn't climbing in the seat and trying to take over the controls. Faith is getting on the plane and going back to the passenger cabin and climbing in a seat, buckling the seatbelt and saying, "Let's go pilot!" And it's that faith that accounted for righteousness.

Lord Jesus...let the Spirit of revelation come upon this people. Lord, we do desire to please you but we have spent so much time trying to please you through our own efforts, thinking this is what you required of us. Not understanding, Lord, we've been ignorant of the fact that it's our faith you're looking for, and only those works that are a product of that faith that is causing us to entrust ourselves to you Jesus. In the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ let the Spirit of the revelation of righteousness by faith come upon this people. Let it be the prevalent, dominant, primary Spirit of this church: the Spirit of faith which is accounted for righteousness...not only for ourselves but for those that are here, for those that are struggling, the backsliders and the sinners that you're wanting to bring back God. Let that be the attitude and the Spirit with which we receive them as people who are unrighteous except for our faith, giving hope to those that don't have hope that they can be righteous either again because they're a backslider or righteous for the first time...simply Lord, in Jesus' name, by their faith. In the name of Jesus. Hallelujah. Lift every burden, Lord, from those who are weighted down and heavily laden...for all of those who have anger, Lord, who pray about stuff that you don't do, to try to obligate you and indebt you to them by what they do, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

Before I preach, let me read two verses of Scripture to you in John 4: 23-24. There really is a reason for what we do here. I know there's no liturgy, no format, no ritual, but here's the reason why:

***“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. “***

That's why two of our services are never alike. Sometimes there seems to be a little bit of a format simply because we have two goals: first and foremost is to allow the Spirit to minister and then second of all, to allow the Word to minister. Praise God! The ministry of the Spirit takes many forms; sometimes it's in song, sometimes it's in prayer...laying hands on one another as the Spirit would lead, sometimes it's in the gifts of the Spirit, and many, many other forms. The other goal, of course, is to allow the Word to minister. This is our purpose, our goal, every time we come to church, is to allow the Spirit and Truth to minister because this is the only way we can be true worshippers. It's important to note that the Greek word translated *worshipper* there or *worship* literally means to prostrate one's self. It is not the word, praise, which refers to what you say usually from the mouth. Worship is the prostration of one's self. That's the literal translation of the word. The figurative interpretation of the word, *worship*, is a prostration of heart before God, meaning a yieldedness of myself before God in order to please Him in whatever I do, say, etc. So it's really important for you to understand the difference.

Turn please to John 16: 7. Now you are going to find out very quickly why I have spent the time in this service to lay a foundation of the love and the mercy and the goodness of God before I preach this message, and I have done my best to allow the Lord to lay a foundation of the goodness, and the love and the mercy of God in order to build this message upon that.

In John 16: 7 Jesus is talking and in just a few minutes after this, however long it takes to read rest of Chapter 16, He prays over them in Chapter 17, and He immediately goes out to the garden of Gethsemane from which He is taken prisoner, and crucified the next day. So, understand the significance of these Words.

***“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged...”***

I preached last Sunday morning and Sunday night from verses 7-9, Monday and Tuesday night from verse 10. This morning I want to preach to you from verse 11.

The purpose of the Holy Ghost, or the Comforter coming to the world according to Jesus, the word, *reprove*, in verse 8 means to convict or convince. The purpose was to convince us of sin, of righteousness, and to convince us of judgment. And the basis for this convincing is because the

***“prince of this world is judged.”***

Praise God!

I say to you without apology that you really have taken the turn into a parking lot of a group of people who truly and literally and still do believe the Word of God just like it's written. This is a group of people who believe in heaven and hell. We believe that literally. In case you're wondering who we are and what we're all about we believe what the Word of God says. Paul, in his writings to the Hebrews in Chapter 5, tells us exactly who the Church is and what the Church believes. He doesn't leave us any question of the determining doctrines of the Church.

In Chapter 6 and Verse 1 of Hebrews he says:

***“Therefore leaving*** [the word, *leave* means to proceed from, not abandon] ***the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection;*** (the word, *perfection* there is completion or maturity, fruitfulness) ***not laying again the foundation of*** (and notice the seven doctrines)

1. ***repentance from dead works,***

2. ***and of faith toward God,*** (saving faith)

3 & 4 ***of the doctrine*** (see the word doctrine is singular) ***of baptisms,*** (that's plural.

We know in the Scripture there are two baptisms that the Church participates in: one is water baptism: that's...the other is Spirit baptism.)

5. ***and of laying on of hands,***

6. ***and of the resurrection of the dead,***

7. ***and of eternal judgment.***

The true Church...now I'm not talking about a denomination or a local congregation, believes all seven of these seven foundational doctrines. They believe in repentance. They believe in having faith toward God. The word, *faith* there is to trust in, rely upon, to cling to, not simply to voice some words of mental ascent. The true Church believes in both baptisms: water and Spirit baptism. These are supernatural experiences. They are not simply forms or rituals that you go through. Something really happens in those. The doctrine of laying on of hands. The true Church believes that God empowers His people

including every believer to lay hands on people for them to be healed, for them to receive the Holy Ghost, for them to have spirits cast out, etc, etc. Jesus told us himself that in Chapter 16:15 of Mark concerning what would happen through the hands of believers, through the faith of believers, these words:

***“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”***

***“And these signs shall*** (not might or maybe) ***follow*** (the word follow in the Greek is closely accompany with) them that believe (not preachers...not some select class of super holy, but every believer) ***these signs shall follow them that believe.”***

***“In my name shall they cast out devils...”***

There are some of you that claim to be Christians, and you don't even believe in devils. You don't even believe in casting them out. That only proves that you're not a Christian. How can you be a Christian if there are no signs following you? Being a Christian is supernatural in origin and lifestyle and experience. It's supernatural not natural. It is not joining some organization called a church. It is being put into the body of Christ himself. And when that happens there will be the manifestation of the power of God in your life and through your life. And when it is, things will happen when you pray.

***“In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues...”***

They did that in the Book of Acts. ...***with new tongues...*** They spoke in other tongues, new tongues, new languages; supernaturally so, not by going to school and learning them.

***“They shall take up serpents...”***

And of course, the Scripture interprets the Scripture. We don't believe in handling snakes but Paul, in the New Testament, was accidentally bitten by a snake when he was doing the will of God, and he did not die even though they expected him to.

***“And if they drink any deadly thing,”***

meaning not that you go about doing such things on purpose but if it happens by accident,

***“it shall not hurt them; and they shall lay hands on the sick...”***

They who?... Believers.

***“And they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.”***

Not so and so's healing campaign...not some big deal going on in some big coliseum somewhere with someone's personal name splattered all over the place. That's a mockery and a travesty to what the Scripture teaches. It communicates completely and totally the wrong thing. I don't go to those meetings and I don't believe in those meetings. Does God work there? Are some of those things miracles? Maybe some of them are. Excuse my skepticism. “I thought you believed in miracles.” I do, and I believe that within God's realm any person sitting here who has experienced the two baptisms, who is a believer in the Lord, Jesus Christ, and is living a forgiven life because you live in a repented life, are just as capable of laying hands on somebody that's sick and them getting healed as John Doe and his healing campaign. That's what the Word of God teaches. And anything that's done or said or in any way we conduct ourselves that causes people to be of the opinion that it's a select group or a small group of specialized men with special ministries, that are the only ones capable of doing this, is teaching something that the Bible does not teach.

So, Paul said that the Church believed, 5. in the laying on of hands. 6. The Church believed in the resurrection of the dead. We do not believe in reincarnation. There is no such thing in this book. It is impossible to be a Christian and believe in reincarnation. You may believe in reincarnation, but you are not a Christian. You may be a "New Ager." You may be in the occult. You may be flat out deceived and ignorant. But, you are not a Christian. The Bible says it's appointed unto man once to die...period! If I'm reincarnated... I don't know why I'm saying this stuff). I'm coming back if the Lord tarries that long, but I won't be coming back as somebody or something else. I'm going out of this life saved and I'm coming back saved. That's what the Bible teaches. I'm going to be resurrected with Him.

Okay I asked you to believe what the Scripture says so we'll go there.

I Thessalonians 4: 13 says:

***"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, (those which are dead and not taking a nap) that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."***



Yes, you are sitting in building among a people that believes that passage of Scripture, literally. We honestly, truly believe that there is coming a day when Jesus Christ is going to speak to His Church, and say to us, "Come up hither." His voice will be speaking as if it were a trumpet. Those that are dead and have died before that moment who are in the grave somewhere, or in the ocean somewhere, whose body may have been to ashes, their bodies will be put back together. Their souls and spirits will come back together in that body, and they will be resurrected as they were and brought together with the Lord up in the clouds. And those of us who are alive according to I Corinthians 15, will be instantaneously changed into that resurrected body and we also will leave this earth and there's going to be an incredible reunion celebration in the clouds between the dead and the living and Jesus! That's in this Book! This Book teaches it! It's not figurative. It's literal. And the reason we know it's literal because the Bible says it is our hope!! Hallelujah! So whether I leave this life by way of death or if I'm alive when it's time to leave this life, it makes no difference to me. He's able to bring the believer out of the ground or out of any mess or situation. They can lock me up, but when He calls, I'm out of there. They can put us away in insane institutions, that's what the Russians did and the Chinese have done with Bible believing Christians for the better part of this entire century. Let me tell you something, friend, it doesn't matter what institution you're locked away in. If you're a believer when the Lord Jesus Christ comes, you're coming out of there. Chains can't hold you. Straight-jackets can't hold you. He's promised it. It's true. It's going to happen! And we believe it because the Bible says it! That settles it. It's in there. We are going to be caught up. I Corinthians 15: 52 says,

***"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed"***

And instantaneously we're going to be taken out of here. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! And, my friend, according to Bible prophecy, this may very well be, and in my opinion is, this is the generation that is going to be alive unless you die of causes other than old age, that's going

to be alive when that moment takes place because everything has been fulfilled that has to be fulfilled except end-time revival. We believe it. We believe it literally like that. Amen! So, if you think we're weird, we're getting weirder because we believe that. That's our hope.

Hear me.

In the book of Titus, Chapter 2, Verse 11, Paul says,

***“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts...”***

Some people believe that the grace of God lets you live any way you want and that you're going to go to heaven...wrong! The grace of God teaches us to live different. If you are a participant in the grace of God or a recipient of the grace of God, the grace of God is teaching you this...that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts,

***“...we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”***

And then, going back to Hebrews 6:2 talking about the seven principles of the doctrine of Christ, the last one: the doctrine of eternal judgment. There is no purgatory. That means also if some churches would teach that when a person dies, if they go to hell, they will be immediately consumed. That's called the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked. You hear me right now, friend, the exact same word that's translated, *eternal* when it comes to

heaven, is the exact same word that's translated eternal when it comes to hell. If hell is short-term, then so is heaven. If hell is momentary, then heaven is also momentary. But if hell is eternal, then heaven is also eternal...never ending...everlasting.

You hear me today. Jesus said the Holy Ghost is come to convince the world, to convict the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. And He said the basis for us being convinced that there's a coming judgment is this: that the prince of this world is judged.

John 12:31 says:

***“Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.”***

You should understand, my friend, that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross changed everything! It didn't just change everything on the earth. It changed everything above the earth and everything beneath the earth. It changed everything. If you read the first chapter of the book of Job you will find that Satan, Lucifer could come before the throne of God even as the angels, the non-fallen angels of God were able to come. But something happened after Calvary. When Jesus Christ died on the cross and He went to hell for three days, and at His resurrection he brought all the souls of the righteous dead out of hell...the place called Hades where Abraham's bosom was according to Luke 16 which is also called Paradise. When he brought all those souls of the righteous dead out of there, everything changed. Jesus said, "... I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." At the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I want you to know, the whole order of the universe changed. Everything was different. Satan and his kingdom were judged. And for the last two thousand years, Satan has known that his time was short. If you are an eternal being, how long is two thousand years? Mathematics teaches us that any finite number divided by infinity is zero. When you divide the finite by the infinite, it's always zero. Praise God!

I'll just give you an illustration. Do you know where the Church is going when it leaves the earth in that rapture...in that catching away? We're all going up for a supper. Do you know how long supper's going to be? Seven years. In God's way of thinking, a meal lasts seven years. That's why we Pentecostals like to eat so well. We're practicing. Hallelujah! We're getting ready for supper. And you know what: that will be a no-fat diet. We'll have glorified bodies. We'll be eating food that even the new-agers will be able to approve. But it won't be natural. And you won't be buying it from Fresh Fields. It will come from Jesus' fields. It will be supernatural. And for some reason, we'll be able to eat and not get fat. Praise God! Since gluttony is sin and there's no sin in heaven, we won't be gluttons. Amen. Hallelujah!

If eternity is forever...forever is what it is. The Scripture says in Jude these words concerning Satan and his judgment:

***"I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."***

Hear me today friend. There is one thing that our humanistic, New Age thinking world and especially this country does not want to face up to nor believe: that is, there is coming a judgment day where all of us will give an account for our lives. You and I will have to be accountable! Do you know why people drive down the street and shoot people at random? They do it because they don't believe that there is accountability. Do you know why people sell drugs so that they can get rich not caring about the consequences? Do you know why tobacco companies and alcohol companies have sold all that stuff all these years? They

don't believe that there is accountability. The only thing that matters is the money. They say, "Well, if people abuse the stuff, that's their fault," as if they have no responsibility. Finally, our government and our court system is catching up with the fact that they did have some responsibility, especially when their own research proved that these things were addictive.

Hear me friend. There is accountability. Doctors have proven that during brain surgery, they could stimulate with electrical impulses, by touching certain parts of the brain with electrical impulses, that they could stimulate the re-living of any event in a person's life. In your brain, regardless of what you think your I-Q is, everything you've experienced from the first moment of coming out of your mother's womb, is permanently imprinted there; every thought, every feeling, every action, every reason you did what you did, every decision you made, is indelibly imprinted there. It's there. So is everything you've done in secret. You can't get rid of it. You can't dispose of it. It's there. It's in your mind. It's there. Not only that but scientists have proven because of the law of conservation of energy, every word you've ever spoken...if we had some kind of instrument that was able to pick it up, that word is still in existence somewhere out there; everything you've ever said. Everything you've ever done that's given off energy exists somewhere.

You and I are going to be held accountable for everything. And the proof that we're supposed to receive from the Holy Ghost is this: angels who were created in the presence of God and live for untold millions of years in the presence of God, fell into sin, and when they fell into sin they were judged. Matthew 25 says that hell was not created for man. Hell was created for the devil and his angels.

Hell is not a human institution. Men are going there as uninvited guests simply because they choose to obey their father, the devil. You prove who your father is by your actions. If I live in sin, my father is the devil. If I want a new Father, I've got to be born again. Jesus told the religious of His day, He said, you're of your father, the devil. Is it possible to go to church every week...is it possible to give in the offering...is it possible to live a good moral

life and your father really be the devil? According to no less of an authority than the Lord Jesus Christ, the Almighty God Himself, it's not only possible, it's exactly what's happening. And if you want to change your conduct, you've got to change your father. And the only way you can change your father is to be born again. And in the new birth, you get a new father.

"Preacher, you're insulting me." I'm not here to insult you. I've got better things to do. But I do have the responsibility to tell you the Truth. And I don't believe the Bible is so difficult of a Book. I realize that the largest Christian church in the world claims, promotes to its people, in which many of you were raised, that the Bible can only be interpreted by the elite, can only be understood by the spiritual specialists in some convent or monastery. But I'm here to tell you something friend. This Book says that God is no respecter of persons. If He is a respecter of persons, then the Book is a lie. You wasted your time coming here or going to any church.

Hear me friend. There is no way God can hold me eternally accountable for my life and the way I live except it's possible for me to know and understand Truth for myself. How can I be accountable for that which I can't know of my own accord? How can He hold me eternally accountable for something that I could not know for myself? How can a God that they claim I can't understand because of their doctrine...it's some kind of hocus pocus, gobbly gook that people have swallowed for centuries without investigating, which most of us were raised believing in, and when you ask questions, explain to me how three can be in one. They tell you that you have to accept it by faith. Don't ask questions. Well, what do you do with a verse where the Lord said in Isaiah 1: 18 which says, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord..." What does that sound like if it's not asking questions? I don't want to have anything to do with a God that's afraid of my questions. I don't want to be afraid of any church that's afraid of my questions. I don't want to sit and listen to any preacher that would be offended at my questions. Excuse me, but I'm not

listening to anyone who tells me to accept something by blind faith because I'm not blind. Sorry...I don't have blind faith. I've got my eyes open and my brain is in gear. My faith is based on the Word of God; what I've seen in it for myself.

Revelation 20:1 says:

***“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless it, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled...”***

This is the thousand year period called the millennium which will commence at the end of the seven years which begins when the Church is taken off of the earth. Then, the seven year period starts where the Church is going to be in heaven at what's going to be called the marriage festival of the lamb, and on earth there's going to be the wrath of the lamb poured out. I can prove to you scripturally that in a seven year period of time one out of every two human beings will die on the face of the earth.

You say, “Come on preacher, that's far-fetched.” That's because you and I are choosing to be willingly ignorant. Do you realize that the bankrupt former republics of the Soviet Union are selling their nuclear weapons underground to terrorists all over this world? And, isn't it amazing that most terrorist are being supported by oil money and there's plenty of that money to pay for whatever is necessary to buy that material and those weapons. Have they proven they are willing to kill for their cause regardless of who gets in the way?

In Revelation 6, God says that He's going to release four horsemen upon the earth, and while man will be doing the button pushing, it will be God that will that permits it, and it's going to be called the wrath of the lamb. And, I can prove to you in this Book whether you

want to hear it or not that if you miss the rapture of the Church and you are here on this earth, one out of every two human beings are going to die in the wrath that is to come. Why? For the same reason that God destroyed the entire world and saved a handful in the first place in Chapter 6 of Genesis. The wrath of God came upon the whole earth in Chapter 6 of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, and the wrath of God is coming upon the whole earth in Chapter 6 of the last book of the Bible. Every soul but eight was destroyed in Chapter 6 of Genesis, and only the saved are going to be saved in the Chapter 6 and the remainder of the book of Revelation.

Hear me friend. The reason He destroyed the world with a flood is that their hearts were fully set in them to do evil. They were wicked. Every thought and imagination of their heart was only evil continually.

We live in a day where supposedly educated, refined, and dignified women even use language that I didn't even hear when aboard a ship in the sixties. There's no shame. There's no shame. There's no embarrassment. I was sitting waiting to get my haircut, just sitting there. This lady sitting near me didn't know who I was. She didn't know what I do. She didn't know anything about me. I was late for my appointment, and I said, "I'm very sorry that I'm late." I gave her an extra tip to make up for the extra time she lost. Do you know what her response to me was? She thought it was okay. You know that statement that some make: \_\_\_\_ happens? That's what she said to me. I'm in a barber shop. I'm sitting in chair to get my haircut. And the lady that was doing another lady's hair who was under a hair dryer, the lady tapped her back-side to get her attention. Her response was, "Oh that's the most thrill I've had in weeks." I thought to myself, "I thought this was a barbershop, not a brothel. What is this place? Is this a front? Are you propositioning me here? What is the deal?"



When some of the vilest profanity you could here is used in “G” rated movies, what does that tell you about the rest of us? You see II Peter 3:3 says it this way:

***“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.”***

The next time, it's not going to be water covering the earth. It's going to be fire!! It's going to be mushroom clouds America. There are many Bible scholars that believe that the Babylon described in Revelation, Chapter 17 is America and that it's going to be wiped from the earth in one day. Friend, just a few weeks ago, I stood with my fingers stuck through the holes of the fence surrounding where a government building used to be in Oklahoma City. That fence was covered with mementos of people grieving. That's been two years yesterday. Six and seven blocks away there are still buildings with their roofs in disrepair from the force of that blast. Around the corner from the blast area there was a Methodist Church that was shielded by the building from the blast which still had every window blown out. On a diagonal corner across the street from that building is a huge YMCA building that's been sitting empty for two years, and every window is boarded up. Blocks and blocks and blocks away, I've got pictures of buildings with windows still boarded up. Every garage door of businesses in the area were just blown out. And that was only a five thousand pound bomb. The only reason that the destruction hasn't been major up to this time is because God has been holding it back. And if you're living in some kind of sand castle or you are some kind of an ostrich with your head in the sand, excuse me, but you're a fool.

People claim that we Christians are too heavenly minded to be any earthly good. I'm sorry, but we have a more objective view of what's going on in this earth than you ever thought of having. We don't live with some kind of ridiculous fantasy that everybody is going to kiss and make up and live happily ever after, because the Book says that it's not going to be. Man is so wicked.

Continuing with II Peter 3:8:

***“But beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord, as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?”***

Revelation 20:4 says:

***“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.”***

Only the saved will be resurrected to live that thousand years. The unsaved will not.

***“This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the best and false prophet (the antichrist) are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”***

These are the answers to the final exam. If you don't pass the test it's because you didn't bother to read. There is nothing that should take you by surprise. The books will be opened and the book of life.

Verse 13:

***“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake***

***of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”***

These verses didn't say anything about being a good person. We already found out what the Scriptures say. ***“...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”*** (John 3:5) The Word of God already says that.

Peter said in Acts 2:38:

***“Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”***

Jesus said:

***“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”***

The Bible was written at a fifth grade level of education. It's not hard to understand. You don't have to have more than a fifth grade level of education to read and understand every word in it. There's no excuse my friend. Do you know why the Bible is written at a fifth grade level of education? Age twelve is the approximate age of accountability. How old are you in the fifth grade? Eleven years old...meaning no person is without excuse. There's not a person reading this that's at least eleven that's capable in God's eyes of reading and knowing for themselves, and you're going to be accountable whether you read it or not.

Jesus said in John 12:47:

***“And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”***

Not your church’s organization or doctrine, or this church’s organization or doctrine... not this church’s articles of faith. Not the church’s articles of faith that you were raised in, but the words Jesus has spoken.

***“For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”***

I don’t have an excuse, my friend. Everyone of us has a choice to make.

And finally I Timothy 5:24 says:

***“Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and they that are otherwise cannot be hid.”***

My friend, please listen to me right now. You have a choice. You can be open and honest before God about your sin. You can find a place to pray. You can repent of your sin and send all of your sins before you to judgment, and God will forgive them. And, when you get there, they will already be judged and you’ll already be saved. But if you choose, and it’s your choice, and if you choose not to be open about your sin now, and not to repent of your sin now, and repentance means to change your direction; not just be sorry and keep on

sinning, but to change your direction by the grace of God to let God change the way you're living, if you choose and it's your choice not God's, if you choose not to deal with your sin now, you will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and your sins will meet you there and you will be judged then and there for those sins, and you will be lost.

You see, friend, it's not how morally good you are or what man thinks of you that's the issue. The whole determining factor is that you can deal with your sins now, or your sins will deal with you later. That's why God is a good God and a loving God, and yet people are still going to hell! I've have people saying to me for years, "God can't be a God of love and send people to hell." They are right because He doesn't send anybody to hell. Sitting here right now, you're making the choice where you're going. You're making the choice where you're going. All that the judgment is going to be is the revelation to every human being standing there and all of us will be, the choice you made either to deal with your sin through the blood of Jesus Christ, His death, burial and resurrection now, or you're going to choose to not deal with your sin now and to live in your sin and enjoy the pleasure of your sin for a season, but end up being judged by your sin condemned to eternal judgment in hell for your sin then. My friend, the reason I can so strongly encourage you is you can't imagine the peace that's available to those who send their sins before them to judgment and let their sins be dealt with before they ever get there. Peace...ah friend...there's nothing like that peace.

There's nothing like that peace...the peace to be able to lay your head on your pillow at night not fearing anything or anybody...not fearing death. I remember my wife saying to me last night, "would you make sure that the garage doors are down." I intended to do it, but I didn't. I got up early this morning to come to prayer meeting and there were two of the garage doors open. Anybody could have walked into my house and done anything they would have wanted. Should I suddenly quake in my shoes and fear thinking what might have happened? No...because you see it didn't matter whether those doors were up or down. I don't have fear because my sin is already dealt with. I'm not afraid of going to hell. Is it because I am good? No, because He's good. Is it because I am righteous? No,

because He is righteous and He lives in me. He's already died for me and taken care of my sins. And every time I fail between now and going to heaven I go right back to Him with my sins and say, "Jesus, I've done it again. Please forgive me. Judge my sin now, Lord. Please forgive me." And He takes away the guilt and peace comes back, and I know with all of my heart. Friend, you can take this statement any way you want to but I know that I'm going to heaven; not because I'm good, not because I live perfectly because I don't, not because I never make a mistake because I do. I know that I am going to heaven because I decided long ago that anytime I sin, I'm going to immediately send those sins before me so that when I get to heaven there's not going to be anything coming behind me to answer for.

It's your choice, friend. He is a kind, gracious, loving and good God. But, He cannot and will not save you against your will. You are not going to answer for your wife or your husband. You are not going to answer for your children. Your children are not going to answer for you. You are not going to answer for your parents and your parents are not going to answer for you. The only one that's going to answer for you is...you. I'm not going to answer for you. This church is not going to answer for you. When you stand there before God on that judgment day, you will stand totally alone. You will either stand there with peace because you have sent all your sins before him and they have already been judged by His death on the cross and you will know you are saved, or you will stand there in terror.

II Corinthians 5:11 says:

***"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..."***

The only people that have to fear God in terror are those who choose to hold on to their sins living like they want to live. We need to pray. It is not the will of God for any to be lost. If you are lost it's because you choose to be lost. The only one that can make you to be lost is you!

# CHAPTER FIVE

## THE BLESSINGS OF HUNGERING AND THIRSTING AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS

The beginning of the Fifth Chapter of Matthew is what is called the Beatitudes. This is the beginning of what is also called the Sermon on the Mount which is three chapters long: Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of Matthew. I would like to read one verse for time's sake. I don't believe the Beatitudes are independent one of another. I don't believe they are self-sufficient one of another.

Matthew 5:6 says:

***“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”***

I believe that the Bible in its original languages is divinely inspired. I mean by that that God literally spoke it to men and had them write down His exact words. I believe that. I believe that there is enough evidence for the honest hearted; those who want to know this to be a proven fact, that if you want to do enough research, there is plenty of material available for a person who is honest, who is not making a decision out of convenience to decide that the Bible is written by man. I've never talked to any person who did any research, to come up with that conclusion. It's people who come to that opinion to excuse themselves so that they can live any way that they want to live. And it sounds really intellectual but something



cannot be intellectual if it's not based on fact. When a person says that the Bible was written by men and is not the Word of God, they open their mouth and confess that they have done no research; that they are simply repeating something that they have heard somewhere by people that lived before them that were looking for an excuse to live their own way.

I know that's very straight. I don't preach and say things in a direct manner for the purpose of being offensive. I say things in a very direct manner, first of all, so that I can be understood. Second of all I say things in a direct manner in order to provoke you to think. Amen.

Now I don't know anyone that truly likes to think of themselves as a dishonest person. I don't know anyone that openly goes around saying that they are deceived. Guess who deceived me...I deceived me. But it doesn't take long to listen to a person talk till you realize that they have deceived themselves. Amen. There are so many facts floating around that people don't know where it came from, but they heard it quoted and they're sure it's a fact. And, it's especially a fact because it helps them continue to live like they want to live. It is easily verifiable with a reasonable amount of research that this Book can't be anything else but the actual Word of God. It was not written by men. It was recorded by men. The Scripture says that it was spoken by God, recorded by men. Of course, the example I've used as long as I can remember is that some would say, "How can we trust men?" Well, the entire business world and all of government operates on the basis of our trust and the ability of one person to dictate a letter, another person to record it properly. You don't find people that make hundreds of thousands of dollars a year or wield the batons of power, the scepters of power in government who write their own letters. There may be a few, but most people don't. And if a man is capable of getting his words recorded properly and putting his signature on it as saying, "These are my words, this is my letter", if a man is capable of doing that, is God incapable? It's ludicrous to consider that God is not near as capable as man to get His Word recorded.

I will repeat very specifically, the Bible is literally the Word of God in its original languages. There are no divinely inspired translations. This is where most people who are willingly ignorant; those who are looking for an excuse, where they have their problems because they look at all these different versions of the English Bible, and they say, "See there...no two versions are exactly alike, so it can't be the Word of God." Nobody's ever said that there is any English version that is divinely inspired. That's why scholarship is necessary to understand the Greek so that, as far as the translators are concerned, to properly translate the languages. But, in its original languages, the Greek in the New Testament and the Hebrew or the Aramaic in the Old Testament, the Word of God is divinely inspired. And the important thing about the Word of God is this: it is God's communication, of His opinions, of His feelings to man. You say, "Everybody is entitled to their opinion." Well, if that's true, then this is God's opinion except that since He's God it takes on more weight than simply an opinion.

You and I must choose, and we all do choose. There is no person in this room or in this world who is neutral concerning the Bible. We demonstrate our choice by our actions. Therefore it is easily stated that everybody has chosen whether or not they believe this is the Word of God. My actions and your actions demonstrate a choice we've made. "I've never made that choice, preacher." Well, that's not true. You have made a choice and your actions prove that choice. When I do not do what the Bible says, when I have no interest in even finding out what the Bible says, and I don't do what the Bible says, I prove that I don't believe it's the Word of God. Because, it is not possible for any intelligent person that is not mentally impaired to say that this is the Word of God and then not do it. Why would any human being who claims to have some measure of intelligence purposely, knowingly refuse to live by what God says? Do you see the simple logic of that? And, it is such simple logic that it's irrefutable logic. It cannot be gainsaid.

And, we're not talking about religion. We're talking about the Bible. So, don't fuss with me and say, "I'm not Pentecostal or Apostolic." Nobody said anything about being Pentecostal or Apostolic. We're talking about the Bible. Amen. If you're going to fuss with me over the

Bible, don't talk to me about what part of Christianity you're involved in because you're not. It is an oxymoron to say you're a Christian and you don't believe that the Bible is the Word of God. That is such a contradiction. It is impossible to say that you are one and not believe the other and be serious. You can't be. Praise God!

I've said all that to come down to this verse in Matthew 5:11. The point that I'm looking to make is this: God says that we are blessed if we hunger and thirst after righteousness. Amen.

In the Old Testament, God had a people. He had a nation. Some people say that it's not fair that God chose a nation. He didn't choose a nation. He chose a man. He chose a man that chose Him. That man was Abraham. Israel was God's people because Abraham was their father and Abraham chose God and led his children into believing God. When that family grew to such extent that it became a nation; twelve tribes of Israel were actually twelve families started by the twelve sons of Jacob, and each family eventually became a tribe after many generations were added on to another, it desired to have a king. The first king they had was named Saul. He was more interested in being a king than being a man of God. The Lord put away Saul because Saul lost his direction, and the Scripture says that God looked for a new man.

I'll tell you the impact that this man has had upon our world. It almost does not matter what culture you were raised in. It's almost impossible in any area of any size to not find at least one male named this name. The man that God looked for and found has such a profound effect upon mankind: his simple life starting out as a shepherd and ended up as a king. It is impossible almost anywhere in the world regardless of the language or the culture, to not find at least one male person named this name. If we took a poll here today I am sure there are plenty here today that have at least your given or middle name is David. How many of you have children that his name is David? Why is that?

What is it about this man? The Scripture says that he was a man after God's own heart. He was a man after God's heart. He wasn't after a kingdom. He was after God. He wasn't after wealth. He was after God. He wasn't after position or power. He was after God. He wasn't after fame. He was after God. He wanted God.

What was it that was so special about David? Let's read David's words.

Psalms 42:1-2 says:

***"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for Go, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"***

Psalms 63:1-2:

***"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary."***

Psalms 84:1-2 speaks also the words of David:

***"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."***

Matthew 5:6 again:

***"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness..."***

The word, blessed, means simply more than being happy. It means highly favored. It is a word that describes God's goodness expressed toward man. It is a word that expresses to us God's desire to show His attitude, His feelings toward man. In our day and time thanks to the TV ministry, blessing has come to have slashes through the Ss, and people only think of blessing when it comes to money. Friend, let me tell you something. Money is not blessing. In fact, sometimes people are cursed because they have it.

God was concerned about Israel. They went into Egypt as family of seventy people. Abraham and his sons, their wives and their children went into Egypt as a family. Four hundred, and thirty years later they went from seventy people to a couple of million people, and even though they were treated as slaves, even though Pharaoh became concerned about this huge, prolific number of people that were reproducing at this phenomenal rate and had no advantages as slaves, to the point that Pharaoh ordered the mid-wives to kill the male babies. When they came out of Egypt, they were over two million strong. They had been slaves for over four hundred, thirty years. Then, for forty more years they lived in tents and wandered in the wilderness, and they ate manna every morning, and they drank water out of a rock, and God miraculously took care of them. But, the thing that God expressed through Moses as His greatest concern for Israel when they went into the promised land and finally had a home was not the giants that were in the land, not the enemies that were there, not the walled cities, not all of those who had opposed them from taking possession of that which God had promised, but the thing that God was most concerned with was that in their prosperity they would get full and forget God.

Solomon, the wise man, who was the son of David, prayed these words: "Lord, don't let me be so poor that I'm hungry and that I steal and curse you for having to steal so that I can eat. And don't let me be so prosperous that I am full and forget you." Amen. "Don't let me live in these extremes Lord, where I lose all confidence in You, or if I do believe You're there, I curse you." There are people sitting here today that have grievances with God. There's something that you thought He should have done that He didn't come through on and now you're angry with Him. There are people sitting here like that today. You try to

do your best not to go to church very often, but somehow you managed to be here today and here you are, and all of this stuff is a bunch of “hogwash” to you because God let you down. He can’t be trusted, etc., etc. You’re living on the side of cursing; whether it was lack of food that caused you to curse or maybe you or someone you knew was sick, or a loved one died, and you asked God to not let them die and they did die, and now you’re cursing God or whatever reason you’re cursing God. And that’s terrible. It’s something you need to deal with. You don’t need to cut yourself off from God like that because there will be a day that we will understand it all. I know that sounds like a “cop-out” and I’ll just let you believe what you want to believe, but I know that there will be a day we’ll understand it all and we’ll see that God wasn’t unfair, unkind, or unjust, that He is kind, patient, loving, good God.

But, I’m not preaching to those people today. It’s going to take more than a preacher and a Bible to reach you. It’s going to take the moving of the Spirit of God on your heart to soften your heart toward Him or you will never, ever be reached, because you are bitter toward God, and preaching cannot get past unforgiveness. Unforgiveness is something that the Spirit of Grace must work in your heart and cause you to be softened toward God and cause you to be willing to forgive God. So, I’m not preaching to reach you. That’s going to take a work of God himself working on your heart.

I’m preaching to reach the people on the other end. I’m preaching to those who don’t have time for God; they’re too busy, or their life is too full; they don’t need God. Or, they’re so religious that they don’t know anything about God. You know, our world is full of people who are so religious they don’t know anything about God? Being religious is a great hindrance to knowing God. Being religious actually makes it more difficult to know God than being a sinner, because Jesus said to the religious of His day, he didn’t even come to recall them to repentance. How can you call somebody to repentance who doesn’t know that they need repentance. He said he came to call the sinner...not the righteous to

salvation, and in the context we know the word, righteous there, was not speaking of those who were truly righteous, but those who were self-righteous, because they were so proud of themselves, because they were so religious.

Religion has really, really brought a bad name on Christianity, because Christianity as a religion is pretty obnoxious. There is nothing inviting about Christianity as a religion. It's very un-enticing. But, true Christianity which is God's way to have an intimate personal relationship with God Himself is not only enticing; it's the only thing that really satisfies. The relationship with the Lord is so far superior to religion that you can't compare the two. They are not on either side of a fine line. They are on opposite sides of a great chasm.

If you've never seen the Grand Canyon, it's quite a sight. At the closest point, the sides of the Grand Canyon are only about a mile apart. But, to go from one side of the Grand Canyon to the other by land, either by foot or by vehicle, is a many, many, many, hour trip even though there is only one mile from one point to the other at its closest point. If you're going to walk from one point to the other, I hope you survive it. A few years ago I walked two hours down into the Grand Canyon on a trail and two hours out, and I honestly wondered if I was going to live. We had ice water in insulated canteens and after we had walked down into the Canyon the ice water in our canteens was hot. If you're going to drive around from rim to rim, it's at least a five hour trip. But, you can stand there and it looks like it's so close. There's that much difference between Christianity as a religion and Christianity as a relationship. You cannot possibly confuse the two unless you don't know anything about the one. Those who only know Christianity as a religion assume that this is what it's all about, and they don't know anything about Christianity as a relationship, and it's just hard to show them the difference. It's like one person standing on one edge of the Grand Canyon on a starless night and saying, "There's a deep whole here." And there's a big difference being on the other side.

Isn't it amazing that Jesus said that it is a blessing; it is a condition of blessing to hunger and thirst after righteousness. Let me express to you a symptom of having no hunger; of having Christianity as a religion: going to church once a week and tapping your watch and wondering what's gone after an hour's gone by. That is Christianity as a religion. It's indicative that you don't know anything about God. We hold the length of our services down for the sake of our visitors because when the Holy Ghost gets to moving, the Spirit of God gets to flowing, we get to fellowshiping with Him, there is no place better. I don't mean Antioch. I don't mean me. I mean in the presence of God.

This same David said in Psalm 16:11:

***“in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures...”***

Why is it that most church services are boring? Why are most churches boring? Why is it that most preachers are boring to listen to? Because...when you're talking about religion, religion is boring, friend. Religion is point blank, flat-out boring. Even Christianity is a religion. Now if you go to a church that stands up and sits down a lot, you get a little exercise, and if they do it often enough you may get some aerobic exercise. I'm not trying to be sarcastic. I'm trying to provoke you to think.

***“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness...”***

“Look preacher, I don't have time for this religion stuff. I've got problems.” Do you have problems? I guess you're not going to eat until they are all solved. Do you have any problems? I guess you're not going to drink anything until they're all solved. Do you mean to tell me that there are some things in life that are so important that your problems, no matter how great you think they are, no matter how difficult your life is at any moment, no matter how good your life is at any moment, never supersedes the need for those things? No matter how difficult my life is at this moment, no matter how good my life is at this moment, the goodness or difficulty of my life at this moment never supersedes my need to



eat occasionally...never supersedes my need to drink something occasionally. Is it by accident that this divinely inspired Book, and I checked the Greek this morning, and the word, hunger there means? Hunger! Do you know what the word thirst there means? Thirst! Is it an accident that God's divinely inspired Word; that the Spirit chose to use two words that no one sitting in this room can refute the meaning of? Is it an accident that God used the word hunger and used the word thirst when He described what it takes to be blessed in relationship to Him: what our attitude toward Him ought to be, what our intensity toward Him ought to be, what our approach toward Him ought to be? "Well, once a week is enough for me!" Well then, eat once a week. Drink something once a week. "Once a week is enough for me and I can't stand that for more than one hour." I tell you what you do. Once a week we'll give you a peanut butter and jelly sandwich with nothing to drink...heavy on the peanut butter. And, tell me that's good enough.

These people who believe that Christianity is satisfied by going somewhere where the church has a nice band, and they entertain you for an hour, and they don't get into any heavy preaching...there are places like that around. They call it a church but they really ought to call it a concert every Sunday.

There needs to be something happening inside you between you and God. There needs to be desire. There needs to be a want...a hunger, a thirst for God. There needs to be something inside us that says that there is someone more important to the quality of my life than a family member, than my job, than my possessions. And, the Lord tells me to be a good father. The Word of God tells me to be a good husband. The Word of God tells me to be a good employer or employee. The Word of God tells me that stuff. We are not talking about being ridiculed by the statement that we are so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good. That's ridiculous! Any person who would make that kind of statement doesn't know anything about the Word of God. If you've got a job and you're cheating on your boss, you're not cheating on your boss...your cheating on God. You claim to be a

Christian...you're supposed to be giving that boss a day's work for a day's pay. That's in the Bible! But our problem is that we're so used to satisfying our hunger and thirst with other stuff that we don't need God...that we don't want God.

Let me tell you something, friend. I like sweets, but after a while I need something else besides cookies. I can't live off of cookies. I like cookies, but I can't live off cookies. I've tried it on a few occasions, and it doesn't work. You can't live off cookies. You've got to have something to chew on. You've got to have something to eat. There's got to be some substance... to life.

Hunger...Thirst...Have you got any? Do you have any desire for God? Do you want to know God? I got up this morning and talked to the Lord. He talked back to me. People call that crazy. Do you know what I call crazy? Living your life never having heard the voice of God! That's crazy! Do you hear voices? No I don't hear voices. I hear a single voice. I don't go around hearing voices. I hear a voice. Jesus said, ***"I am the good shepherd and the sheep know my voice."*** (paraphrase of John 11:14-16) My God does not inhabit a statue. That's why there are no statues in this building. I don't need a statue. He doesn't live in a statue. He lives in me. He doesn't live in a painting. He lives in me. It's fellowship! It's intimate fellowship!

I'm not trying to be crude or rude. I'm just preaching what's in the Bible. I love my wife, and intimacy is a part of that love. But friend, intimacy with the Lord is so far and above that. Every day she goes her way and I go my way. She has things to do and I've got things to do. I don't ever go my way and the Lord goes His way...not willing...not knowingly.

Acts 17:22 says:

***“Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.”***

What can you tell about a man by watching him worship? What can you tell about a person by watching them worship? You can tell if they know who God is. Paul stood and watched the Athenians worship and he could tell they didn't know who God was. They had all these altars and all these statues, and just to make sure they didn't miss one, and they were missing **the** one, they had this altar that said TO THE UNKNOWN GOD, and he said, “I watched your devotions. I watched you worship and I knew you didn't know who God was.

I know it sounds like I'm critical and I'm not trying to be critical. I'm trying to provoke you to think. Whether you come to Antioch or not is not even the issue. Whatever your denomination is is not the issue. I am preaching to you what the Word of God says. Do you know how you can know that a person doesn't know God? They have to have a book to pray out of. Do you know how know when a marriage is in trouble? When you have to have a book to tell you how to treat each other. I've tried to learn all I could about being a good husband and understand my wife, and also be able to teach that. But, if I needed to have a book to tell me now, “go home.” Okay. “Now, greet your wife.” Okay. I realize there are some of you here who have prayed out of a book all of your life. You don't know any other way to pray. You don't know any other way to pray. But, I'm preaching something better than that. Not Antioch. Not Pentecostalism. I'm not preaching Pentecostalism. I'm preaching Jesus to you. There's a better way! If you never come back here...that's your business! That's between you and God. Where you go to church is your business. But I've got a responsibility to preach to you that God wants you to want Him! God wants you to want Him! “My...this is good.”

Are you going to stop at one bite? Have you ever sat down to a tender, juicy steak seasoned perfectly...cooked exactly right...slice off one piece of meat, stick it in your mouth and say, "Boy...this is good" and then stop eating? If it's good, do you know what you're going to do? You're going to clean the plate. And, yet you come to God and claim to be a Christian and say, "Why do you sing those songs over and over so much?" And..."Why does church go longer than an hour?" Well, just as there are some people here that don't eat meat...there are some people here that don't want God. So you wouldn't understand...wouldn't you? But we prayed an hour and a half this morning that when you walked in this building that at some point in this service today that God would cause you to begin to hunger and thirst after Him. Now He can't do that against your will, but He's trying. He wants to do that.

Continuing with Acts 17:23:

***"For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;"***

What does He give? He gives life, and breath, and all things. A young man came to Socrates, the great philosopher, many centuries ago and said, "O Socrates... I want truth. Teach me truth." Socrates said, "Come down with me to the sea." And he took the young man by the hand and led him into the water. He said, "Now kneel down." The young man knelt down and Socrates pushed the young man's head under the water and held it there a few moments, pulled his head up and said, "What do you want?" He says, "I want truth." Socrates pushed the young man's head under the water again, held it under a little longer, pulled his head back up and said, "What do you want?" The young man said, "O

Socrates, I want truth.” Socrates replied, “When you want truth like you want air, then I’ll be willing to be your teacher.” I’ll go a little farther. When you want God like you want air, God is willing to be your God.

You don’t have to worry about Him knowing you and you knowing Him. When you want God like you want air, and if you want to find out how much you want air, hold your breath for two minutes. I guarantee that there aren’t five people in this room that can do it. You can’t do it. And only a few people can do that, and they’ve trained themselves to do that. It doesn’t come normal. There’s something in me that when I hold my breath for fifteen seconds, it says, “Breathe!” After thirty seconds it says, “Breathe!!” After forty-five seconds it says, “Breathe!!!” After sixty seconds it says, “Are you stupid?!!!!”

It’s in there. It’s in there. Do you want God? “Well, nobody lives like that today.” You’ve come too late to say that. I know a lot of people that live like that. Absolutely. Blessed...is there anyone hear that wants to be blessed today?

***“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness...”***

Do you think these young people are stupid? Young people are smart. They want to go to Youth Congress. Guess what you have to walk by to go home? Hamburgers frying. Hotdogs being grilled. Barbeque chicken. You can say you’re not hungry but when you walk by that and that smell hits your nose, instantaneously something happens down inside you. You didn’t think you were hungry but you are. Some of you are hungry right now. Absolutely! Yes! That’s why you come to church no matter how bad it gets because you thought you weren’t hungry. You thought you had too many problems. But friend, when I walk into the presence of God...the Scripture says:

***“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”*** (Matthew 18:20)

So, when I'm going through it so much that I think I don't want God, I walk into the house of God, music begins to play, people begin to sing, and the Scripture says you:

***"...come before his presence with singing."*** (Psalm 100:2)

And you begin to sing, and at first you don't begin to feel anything but you start singing just because it's time to sing. But after a while you begin to get this fragrance.

The Scripture says:

***"O taste and see that the Lord is good..."*** (Psalm 34:8)

This God I'm talking about:

***"...he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."*** (Acts 17:25)

The Bible says in James 1:17:

***"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."***

These young people really want to go to Youth Congress. I think I'm going to talk about food some more. So you just can't imagine going past there. You can't get home quick enough.

***"...he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things."*** (Acts 17:25)

Listen please. God, in describing to us how He thinks we ought to want Him, says that our desire should be akin to hunger. You know, I can hunger longer than I can thirst. I've gone without food for a couple of weeks before. But medical science says that if you go more than three days without something to drink, your entire system shuts down. People have gone forty days without food before if they had something to drink. So look at this. At the outside, the average person couldn't exist for more than forty days without food. You can't exist more than four or five days without water. You can't exist more than two minutes without air. And, God uses all of these to describe how you and I should want Him.

Continuing to read from Acts 17:26:

***“And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should see the Lord...”***

“Well, I don't know anything about God like you're talking about, preacher.” Do you want to know? You are not going to know unless you **seek** Him. And how do we seek Him? Here's where people stumble big time.

***“If haply, that's old English for, if by chance, they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from any one of us.”***

“I don't like that, preacher!” Well, I'm sorry. This proves that this is not religion. It's relationship because you pursue knowledge with your mind... you pursue relationship with your feelings. I don't care what kind of “cold fish” you are, Mr. Intellect. There's no way in this world you're interested in being married with no feelings. I don't care how much intellect you claim you have, and how smart you say you are. I feel so sorry for you if you're in a marriage with no feelings, or if you're a father and you have no feelings for your kids, or you perceive that they have no feeling for you. was sitting doing some final studying on the couch this morning. My daughter-in-law walked in with that baby, and I

hadn't seen her in a couple of days. She sat down on the floor with that baby right in front of me. The computer went one way, and everything else went somewhere else. I picked that little baby up and stood her up in my lap, and that smile on her face just made my day. That smile just made my day. If nobody else loves me, I know Elizabeth does. If nobody else thinks I'm a good guy, Elizabeth does, and I'm not going to do anything to ever change her opinion. Her daddy can spank her because it's his job. I'm a granddaddy. That means I've graduated. I don't have to do that anymore. He can say no. I get to say yes! And I promise you this. She is absolutely going to believe that I am the grandest thing going. I promise you that.

If you've got relationships with no feeling, you have no relationships. The Orioles have the best record in baseball right now. (statement made in Spring, 1997). Do you know what they claim is the reason for that? They have what they call, great clubhouse chemistry. Do you know what that is? That's just somebody's jargon for saying that the guys like each other. And because they like each other, they have a good feeling toward each other. They pull for each other. They play better together. Isn't that amazing? And, all kinds of businesses try to bring that same thing into the company. They know that if people like each other, they have good chemistry. They get along, and the company is going to operate better.

Now, the God, Creator God that made you like that and made me like that, do you honestly believe that He wants us to come to church and there's not supposed to be any feeling? That you're supposed to go to prayer, and there's not supposed to be any feeling? That your relationship with Him is supposed to be one that's all intellectual or some hocus pocus where you're supposed to go through some ritual rather than a feeling.

Let me tell you something, friend. If I'm riding down the road and someone pulls out in front of me and my brain says that there's not enough room at this speed to stop, I sure want to be able to say rather than some curse word, Jesus!...with feeling. I don't want to have to whip out my Book, turn to page three and say, Jesus! I want to know He is there; that I can



talk to Him...that He is listening. I want Him to know that He can talk to me and that I'm listening. How do you know that? Because you desire Him like you do food? Because you desire Him like you do drink? Because you desire Him like you do breath? If your desire for Him is far below that, you need to ask Him to stir it up in you.

Philippians 2:13 says:

***“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”***

The word, *will*, in the Greek means to wish, want or desire. Wanting precedes doing. If I'm not doing, I don't want to. That's why Jesus didn't say, keep my commandments and you'll love me. Jesus said, ***“If you love me, keep my commandments.”*** What is see saying? The only true path to obedience so that Christianity is not just a set of dos and don'ts that I'm doing religiously, but the true path to obedience is “wanting to”, and there's nothing like making us “wanting to” like love. But, you don't fall in love with somebody that you don't spend time with; that you don't talk to.

Like most people with a long distance relationship, I had to get married. I couldn't afford the phone bill. I'm being facetious of course, but we had to talk every day. I don't know what we talked about but we managed for at least a couple of hours a day. We managed. We found something to talk about. Why? Because we were in love. Do you know why people don't pray? There's something lacking in their love. They don't have a “want to” to pray. Do you know why people get a little headache or they're tired and they don't come to church? There's no “want to.” It's not a question of coming to church because it's a religion and it's what you're supposed to do because it's a religion. It's what you do because you **want to**, and you **want to** because you're in love: loving God! But you don't just fall in love in God. You've got to learn something about Him. We love Him, the Bible says, because He first loved us.

If you believe the Bible and you really want to know Him, I want you to f this pray to God and ask Him to help you hunger and thirst more intensely after Him. I'm asking you to pray to want to know Jesus. I want you to say out loud, "I want to know you Jesus. Jesus wants you to be your friend. Feel after Him. Seek Him.

John 7:37 says this:

***"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."***

They had been feasting for seven days. The seventh day was the great day, the biggest feast day of the seven. They had been eating and drinking for seven days and this was the day they had eaten and drunk the most: the seventh day. Jesus stood and cried out to those who were present. "After all of this activity here: this eating and drinking, is there anybody here still thirsty?" He said, "You're the ones I'm looking for."

***"...If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."***

Friend, if that's what the Lord is looking for, I'm asking Him to make me thirsty.

The Bible says,

***"Ye are the salt of the earth..."*** (Matthew 5:13)

Salt makes us thirsty. I want to be thirsty. I want to be hungry after Jesus. I want to thirst after Jesus. I want my thirst for Jesus to be bigger than my problems. I want my hunger for Jesus to be bigger than my possessions. I want my desire for Jesus to be greater than my enjoyment of my possessions and my pleasures.

It's okay to have things. It's okay to have pleasures. The Bible says that God gave us taste for food. There is pleasure in eating. There is pleasure in intimacy. It's not the pleasure that's the problem; the positive pleasures of life. The problem is when you put those pleasures ahead of God. It's when you want them more than you want Him.

Please let God talk to you and you talk to Him. "Lord, I want to hunger for you. Lord I want to thirst for you. Make me hungry for you. Make me thirst for you.

Paul said in Philippians 3:7 & 10:

***"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ...that I might know him..."***

I don't care how much of an expert you are in religion. That doesn't mean that you know anything about God. I'd rather be ignorant in religion, and an expert in relationship with God. He is fair. He is so kind. He is truly no respecter of persons. A child can have a relationship with God even though intellectually they might not be able to understand everything. God is so kind. Because He made knowing Him a matter of relationship, He didn't leave anybody out. I've known retarded (mentally impaired) people who were Christians because they understood love when they couldn't understand anything else. Isn't God kind? Yes He is. Isn't He fair? Yes he is...because He made the whole thing based on relationship and not on intellect. That's the fairest thing He could have done. We may not all have the same intellectual capacity, but I believe we all have the same capacity to love.

Lord, I pray for all of you who have read this material. In the name of Jesus, I ask you to baptize us with a hunger and a thirst for You. In the name of Jesus, renew us, refresh us, intensify the hunger and thirst that we have. You promised that you would work hunger in us. You promised that you would cause us to will, to desire, to seek you, Lord. Let us feel after you. Let us find you. We need you Jesus more than we need food. We need you

more than we need drink. We need you more than we need air. Give us that revelation, God. Open our hearts and our minds to the understanding, God, of how much we need you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

# CHAPTER SIX

## GOD CLOTHES US WITH HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS/INNOCENCE

Genesis 3 is probably the single most important chapter in regards to man in all of Bible, and the reason that is because it tells us how man sinned, what it was that caused man to sin, and it also gives us the pattern and establishes the principle by which God is going to deal with mankind from now on. We can learn about God and ourselves in this chapter, and we can learn a tremendous amount about how God deals with mankind to bring him back from his sin, his guilt, and his shame.

So from that context, we read in Genesis 3:7-13

*“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.”*

Continuing with Genesis 3:20-21:

***“And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”***

I have preached and taught and ministered in public, one-on-one, and in private, and in altar areas since February 15, 1993 that the nakedness that they saw and understood was shame, and it is not nakedness that separates us from God, it is our shame. And, that shame is grudge that we have against ourselves because we cannot forgive ourselves for the things that we have done wrong, and for the way that we have been made to feel about ourselves by the things that people have done to us. Amen.

People who are full of shame are manipulators. They are controllers. You let a person full of shame think they have a little handle on the Word of God, and the next thing you know, they want to become everybody’s tyrant. Amen. I preach the Word of God here, but I am not a policeman, and if you don’t live it, that’s between you and God. Amen.

But, shame is debilitating because it prevents a person from seeking out God. It is not sin that separates God from man here and now. Sin only separates us from God in eternity. But, God comes seeking for us in spite of our sin. But, man hides from God just like he hides from each other. I want you to notice that it is implied that Adam and Eve were not hiding with each other. They appeared to be hiding separately from God. There is no way really, you and I can be open with each other and honest with each other if we have shame. If we have shame we will not find it easy to be used of God. If you are a person who fears failure, if you are a person who is fearful of rejection, you are a person who is dealing with shame.

“Come on, Brother Wright, everyone is afraid of failure.” No...not true. God made man. He knew man could fail. He made man anyway. He knew man’s failure would make God

look like a failure. He made man anyway. He also knew that man could reject Him. He made man anyway. A person that is totally free from shame is not afraid of failure, and is not afraid of rejection. But, those of us who fear failure and fear rejection have shame.

And it is important to note that God, in the Garden, did not stop with taking care of Adam and Eve's sin, but He dealt with their shame. There are so many of us who have dealt only with our sin, and that's our problem. That's why we still struggle. That's why we don't have joy. That's why we don't have peace. We still have shame. Amen. In fact, dealing with shame is so necessary, that when God dealt with the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden, He didn't even specifically mention it.

The Bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. How did God get skins to make coats with? It doesn't say specifically, but we know. Skins weren't just lying around on the ground. Up to that point there had been no death. There were no carnivorous animals at that time. All animals ate vegetation. They did not eat each other. There was no death in the Garden of Eden. And the Word of God says in Genesis 2 that the soul that sins shall surely die. (Paraphrase of Gen. 2:17) Praise God!

The problem that we face is this. We talk about the blood, and the blood is important. The Bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. If there had been no death the only way you get the skins to make the coats with meant that animals had to die. From typology, we know that those animals were sheep. Those animals died. I don't know how many sheep it took to make two coats for Adam and Eve. But, notice He didn't say shirts. And He sure didn't say bikinis. He said coats. He shed blood, took the skins, and made coats. Notice, if God had only been concerned about the sin, the shedding of blood would have been enough. All through the Old Testament, my friend, the only thing they did was shed blood. From the Garden of Eden until Pentecost, the only thing they did was shed blood. That's all. Blood was shed.

The Bible in Leviticus 17:11 says that we are not to eat the blood:

***“For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.”***

And it is this covering of the nakedness, the exposure of our flaws, remember this...that their acknowledgement of nakedness was a direct result of sin. So, they had more than guilt, they felt exposed, they felt flawed, they felt different because they were different. Before, they had no shame. So, in innocence they were clothed, and when they looked at each other they didn't see nakedness. But when they sinned, the Scripture says that they knew they were naked. And the reason the Scripture says in Genesis 2:25 that they were naked but weren't aware of it being nakedness was because they were not ashamed. So, if they sinned and they knew they were naked, then they must have been ashamed. So, when God dealt with man He didn't just shed blood which is all that is necessary for sin to be removed. He also took the skins of those animals and made coats for Adam and Eve. He took their human-made aprons off and put on them coats. Praise God! And, my friend, the significance of that is absolutely beyond calculation.

I don't know why that I haven't thought of it until this past week. I've been teaching on righteousness a little bit and I've been in San Antonio, Texas Thursday and Friday night. I was teaching on shame down there and then Friday night I dealt with righteousness. I didn't really make the connection. I find that there are some years when look back on them and realize that they were incredibly significant years for me. In 1988, there were a few kind of significant things that happened in my life. First of all, I was elected District Superintendent. I celebrated my twentieth anniversary of being graduated from the Naval Academy, and my twentieth anniversary of starting to preach. I was given an honorary doctorate degree. I disfellowshipped the first and only person that I've ever disfellowshipped from this church. We went through the "Eighty-Eight Reasons" deal. I got sued. I celebrated my twentieth wedding anniversary. And, near the end of that particular



period of time, is when God gave me the revelation of righteousness. He gave me the revelation of righteousness. It was in February of 1984 when He first began to minister to my shame. In November of 1988, He gave me the revelation of righteousness. And, it's important for us to note that Isaiah 61:10 says that one of the things the Lord does for us is He covers us with the robe of righteousness.

I want you to notice this please. There is a reason why Jesus said in the Beatitudes,

***“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness...”***

(Matthew 5:6)

Notice that He did not say to hunger and thirst after the gifts of the Spirit. Notice that He did not say to hunger and thirst after revival. He didn't say hunger and thirst after holiness. He said:

***“...hunger and thirst after righteousness...”***

I wonder how many of us today are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. First of all I don't think there are many of us that are hungering and thirsting after righteousness because there aren't many who know what righteousness is. But He said:

***“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.”***

I submit to you tonight that one of the most important things, maybe the most important thing that you can do and need to do as a Christian is:

***“...hunger and thirst after righteousness.”***

King James says that you shall be satisfied. The literal Greek says that you shall be completely filled. Would the figurative idea of that be made whole? If you hunger and thirst after righteousness, you will be made whole...completely filled? Completed...finished...filled? Isn't that a synonymous idea with made whole?

Is there a possibility that the biggest problem that most of us are struggling with is that maybe we know that we're forgiven, but we're running around naked? And that's not the Pastor's idea, and that's not God's idea. It could be that the problem is that you're just not aware of what the robe is or the coat is and how to put it on.

You know, sometimes we know too much about each other. That's really a hard problem when you're family, because if you have close friends or family and you see each other on a daily basis, the difficult problem with that is, you see the stuff that God doesn't see. Did you hear what I said? When you're really close with someone; your husband, your wife, your kids, your parents, or whomever, your best friend, the problem is you're so close to that person, you see the stuff that God doesn't see. And you make your judgments on what you see. God makes his judgments on what He sees. And, He doesn't see what you see. And that's our biggest problem. We see things about each other that God doesn't see. If just one person gets this revelation it will be worth the effort. Hallelujah.

***“Without shedding of blood is no remission”*** (of sins). (Hebrews 9:22)

God took the lives of some animals, probably sheep, shed their blood; that took care of the sin. He didn't stop there. He took the skins of the animals and made coats and put coats on them because being forgiven wasn't enough.

I've said to you that justification is the process, righteousness is the product. There is a big difference between being forgiven and being justified. Some of you reading this have only ever been forgiven. You've never been justified. And I'm going to tell you something right now. You cannot successfully live for God only forgiven. You cannot. Both in the Greek

and in the Hebrew the words normally translated forgiven, means to be pardoned. When a person is pardoned, it means this: they've been charged in a crime, they've been tried, they've been found guilty, convicted, and they have been sentenced, and a higher power says, "You don't have to pay the penalty for your sin or your crime. You are guilty. You were charged. You got a fair trial. You were convicted. You were sentenced. But, you don't have to serve it. That's pardoned. That's forgiven. That's a good start, but you can't stop there. If you stop at being pardoned, you will always struggle in your walk with God. You'll never have any faith. You won't have peace. You will always be open to condemnation. Do you know why? Because, you're forgiven but you're still naked! You have been pardoned, but you're still naked!

Pardoned...but still naked. What does God want to do about that? What is it that He desires to do? How does He desire to fix that? Here's the problem.

If you will turn with me please to II Corinthians 5:21:

***"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."***

Now, if you will turn to I Peter 3:18:

***"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."***

Friend, the word righteous means to be declared innocent or to be acquitted. You've been charged, tried, and found innocent. We say to each other, "Wait a minute...that can't be. I can't be innocent. I know I did it." Then how in the world can we be righteous? This is

where you all are struggling with this righteousness stuff. To be declared innocent...we struggle with that. How can we be innocent when we know we've done what we're accused of doing?

***“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”***

The just, according I Peter 3:18, died for the unjust. The innocent; the word *just* there means innocent, the innocent died for those who weren't innocent. Are you ready? Here's what He did. He took our guilt upon himself and gave us His innocence. He took my guilt. He became the one charged for the crime. He became the one guilty for the sin I did, and He gave me in exchange His innocency, so that when I am looked at by Him he doesn't see guilt, He sees His own innocency. You didn't get it.

We've been charged. He is our Comforter. Another translation of *paracletos* is counselor or lawyer. He is our defense attorney. Do you know any defense attorney like this one? He stands before the judge of all the universe and the man, Christ Jesus, the pure, innocent Son of God says, "Judge...this is my client. They've committed a crime, but we're going to switch places. I am now on trial for them, and they have my innocence. Yes! Some of us sin so casually and repent so flippantly as if it's just some little magic formula. Some of us are still Catholics, buying our indulgences that allow us to indulge in sin and be okay. We don't understand what it cost Him to make the switch with us.

We don't understand what it cost Him to make the switch with us. All of you have to do to know how difficult it was, is to observe the Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane for a few minutes. What was this cup He was going to be drinking? He was going to drink the cup of my guilt into his innocent, pure body, soul, Spirit. His body so recoiled from that that the vessels of his heart broke and leaked blood into the pericardial sac that surrounds the heart, so that when they thrust His side with a spear, out of His side came blood and water, which is evidence that He didn't die on the cross.

It was possible to be crucified and hang on the cross for three or four days because crucifixion didn't kill you. Frequently they had to break the legs of the prisoners so that they would quit pulling up on the nails so that they could breathe and not suffocate to death. Tell me why it was that in just six hours of hanging there Jesus died? It wasn't the cross that killed Him. It was the cup that killed Him. It was the cup that contained my sin and your sin. He who knew no sin became sin for us. He took my sin and the stress and strain that He felt upon receiving my sin, put such strain on His being that His heart ruptured...and gave me His innocence.

And, we just flippantly sin. We just flippantly get involved with the world and things, and then we come to God and say, "I'm sorry", thinking it's an easy thing. It's easy for us because it was hard for Him.

John 1:29 says:

***"...Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away, (which beareth away) the sin of the world."***

Just like in the Garden, four thousand years later the Lord slew a Lamb, shed blood for our sin, but took of His skin and made us coats to wear. What was His skin? What was it that God took? It was His innocence. He was innocent. The word, righteous means to be innocent. God took off His innocence and made robes that we could put on...and those robes are robes of righteousness. And, when I put those robes on...it doesn't matter what you've done...it doesn't matter if anyone knows what you've done. The issue is this: I am not covered with my guilt. I am covered with His righteousness! His innocence! He became guilty. He took my guilt so that He could give me His innocence...so that I could wear His innocence like a coat.

What does a coat cover? A coat covers everything underneath it. Hallelujah! A coat covers everything, friend. It was not by accident that the father forgave the prodigal while he was still muddy and stinky. But, let me tell you what he did after he forgave him. He took the best robe; it was the father's robe and the father had been faithful. And the father was righteous. And the father was pure. And the father was good. And the robe was clean! It was the father's best robe! And he put it on the son. You can say, "Well, he wasn't worthy!" You don't understand. In the eyes of everyone there, by taking his robe and putting it on the son, the father was saying, "I take any accusation he is guilty of. I am worthy of the accusation."

You've got to get this in Jesus' name. This is the answer. This is the difference. This is how you keep going when you've been struggling. This is how you come into the presence of God when things have been difficult. This is how you do it. You don't come into the presence of God in your own goodness because we don't have any goodness. We come into the presence of God clothed in His coat. We put on God's robe and that robe is God's innocence. The process of putting it on is called justification. He makes it just as if we've never done it.

To reject this robe and to not live in this innocence is to reject the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. You hear me tonight. We are not saved by repentance, water baptism, and receiving the Holy Ghost. We are not saved by Acts 2:38. We are saved the death, the burial, and the resurrection of the Lord, Jesus Christ. And we appropriate, or receive unto ourselves the death, the burial, and the resurrection by repenting and dying out to our flesh in crucifixion through repentance, and by being buried with Him in water baptism, and by being resurrected to walk in the newness of life in the baptism of the Holy Ghost. But it's not repentance, and water baptism and baptism in the Holy Ghost that saves us. It's not something we've done that saved us. It's His death that saves us! It's His burial that saves us! It's his resurrection that saves us! That provides us the opportunity by which we can take upon ourselves His innocence. My God!

You sit around in these services weeks and months and you wonder why nothing is happening. I'm going to tell you why. It's hard for a bunch of naked people to have revival. Nobody wants to come around. People already feel exposed enough as it is. They don't want to come around a bunch of naked people and be more exposed. But, oh my friend, if there is any way in this world that through **faith**, and it is through **faith** that you put on the robe of righteousness, if people walk into a place with people who know that under that robe they're unworthy, but His death, burial, and resurrection makes them worthy, and they put on that robe, and they walk into the midst of a group of people who have become innocent because they are wearing Jesus' own innocence, let me tell you something, that changes everything! That changes everything!

Let me ask you something. If I really did it, but I'm wearing His innocence, do you think I look at people and judge them? I'd be a fool... to gossip, and find fault and accuse somebody else? No wonder the Scripture says:

***"...to his own master he standeth or falleth..."*** (Romans 14:4)

If you are accusing people; that proves you're not wearing a robe. If you're judging people; that proves you're not wearing a robe. That proves you're still trying to be righteous by your own works. We can't earn anything from Him. How does a guilty person earn innocence? How does a guilty person earn innocence? My God! My God! They can't. The only way I can be innocent is for an innocent person to take my guilt on them and give me their innocence. Give it to me. And I put it on. It looks so casual and so easy until I look at what He did to provide the coat.

There were animals in the Garden of Eden that gave their life and their blood to provide those first coats. And they were just animals. But, the precious Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, Holy and pure, gave His own life in order to give me His innocence. Hallelujah! My friend, we don't want to let go of the opportunity to earn our way. But the foolishness of that is, it is impossible.

You can't pray enough to become innocent. Now once you become righteous, you'll pray. You'll pray more than you've ever prayed in your life. But it won't be pressure. It will flow. You can't fast enough to be innocent. But once you become righteous, you become innocent. You'll fast, and it won't be for yourself. It will be so God can use you to help others. You can't give enough to be innocent. But once you become righteous, you become innocent. You'll know that what you've got is a gift from God, and if it's needed in the Kingdom, you're more than willing to give it and you don't feel like you're making a big sacrifice. You can't win enough people to become innocent. But once you become righteous, you become innocent, the love and the anointing of the Lord will flow through you to touch other people's lives. It will just flow. There won't be any strain. There weren't be anyone having to ride your back to witness or to bring somebody to church. It will just flow.

You listen to me right now. I'm going to say this. I want you to hear this. Brother Suber told me that Antioch doesn't understand something. This is not a revival that any preacher is going to bring. God is trying to establish that this harvest is going to be a harvest of the people. God is going to use the people. How can He use guilty people? How can He use people that are full of shame? How can He use people that feel naked or exposed? Not able to open their mouths because they don't feel worthy to? How does He do that? He can't do that. But, when I take on His innocence...I put on His robe...He covers my nakedness, I'm no longer guilty. I'm innocent. I'm wearing His innocence. That's what God sees. God sees that. I'm wearing His innocence. And there isn't anything He can't use me to do. Nothing.



Let's turn to I Peter 2:21-25:

***“For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”***

Listen to the way Isaiah 53:4 says it:

***“Surely he hath borne out griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did, esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to this own way: and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”***

The *New International Version of the Bible* says it this way:

***“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.”***

Again, II Corinthians 5:21 says:

***“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”***

## **HE MADE HIM SIN!**

You are trying to receive this intellectually and this is not intellectual. You've got to let this come into your heart. You've got to receive this into your spirit. This is by faith. You have to believe this. Only by faith can you receive this. The only way you can receive this is by faith! Hallelujah!

Friend, the only purpose for looking at your sins is to repent. Do you know what you're doing when you repent? You're giving Him the sins. He was made sin for us. He was made sin for us. He who was not sin was made sin for us so that we who were guilty could be made innocent; could be made righteous.

This isn't "mumbo-jumbo." This isn't hocus-pocus. This is the whole basis of Christianity. If you don't receive righteousness it proves you don't really believe in and trust the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It proves you're still trying to do it yourself. You're still trying to earn it. You're still trying to deserve it. You can't earn it or deserve it. That's why it was His grace. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. It was His grace that took Him to the cross; His unmerited favor for us. His unmerited favor sent Him to the cross so that He could deal with our sins. He became guilty for us so that we could righteous for Him.

The *New International Version of the Bible* says: you said: we became...the Scripture says: might become)

***“...so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”***

Ephesians 4:22 says:

***“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;”***

How do we put it off? We put it off by repentance and water baptism. We're crucified with Him. When we repent, we're crucified with Him. We bury the old man. We put it off.

***“And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”***

It's not something you become by what you do. You put it on. You take off the old man. The Lord put on our old man and took it to the tree. He bare our sins. The Lord took our old man. We put off our old man. He put on our old man and took it to the cross so that we could put on the new man; the new man created in righteousness. We put off the old man full of iniquity and sin so that we can put on the new man. Hallelujah.

Without His righteousness, I'm exposed, but I put on His righteousness, and it covers me. I am righteousness. When God sees my robe, what He sees is His robe because I got it from Him. His robe is innocence. It's righteousness, and I put it on. In Jesus' name. Hallelujah! Put on the robe. By faith, you put on the robe. Put on His innocence. Do you know why Jesus Christ was crucified naked. Because He took on our shame. You will never figure it out. You've got to put it on! Put on innocence in Jesus' name! It's a robe of righteousness!

He took my shame! He took my guilt! He gave me His robe! He covered my nakedness! He gave me innocence! You have to receive it!

As long as you're only forgiven, you're still open to condemnation and shame. But, Oh friend, if you'll just put on the robe of righteousness... Receive it! He took your guilt and made you innocent!

Amen.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## THE EFFECT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Let's begin with Ephesians 6:10:

***“Finally my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;”***

You've got to put this on to be able to stand: the breastplate of righteousness. If you've been floundering, if you've been struggling, if you've been under condemnation, if you've been battling guilt, if you're battling shame, it's proof that you're an open target, that you don't have on the breastplate of righteousness. I want you to notice that it's a robe of righteousness to cover our nakedness. It's a breastplate, a piece of armor to protect our heart against condemnation. Put it on. It's your protection from God. Righteousness is being in a state of innocence. Where do we get that innocence from? It is a gift from Him. He takes our guilt upon Himself. He takes His innocence and puts it on us.

Romans 8: 31 says:

***“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”***

Hear me right now. When you walk in righteousness, you walk in this confidence: If God is for me, and He is because He gave me His righteousness, who or what can be against us?

I preached last Wednesday, Thursday and Friday in San Antonio, Texas for Brother Tim Wallace. His church is a large church and it has been battled. They have four congregations under that one ministry. It's a good church and the people love God but over the last few years there has been an occasion where spirits have come in to that congregation, and they have left sixty, seventy, eighty people at a time. People have gone through severe sicknesses that doctors couldn't find any cause for. People have battled depression. I asked the congregation on Thursday night how many people have battled depression over the last several years, and almost everyone in the place raised their hands admitting that in the past two years they had battled depression. And then I told them, you know how I do and said, “None of that is the will of God.”

Let me tell you something. If you're not dressed in the robe of righteousness and wearing the breastplate of righteousness during these times where we're walking by faith, we know we've done the will of God, but we're in that in-between place between doing the will of God and receiving the promise, we know God's said it, we know we've done it, we've obeyed Him, we've done everything He's told us to do, and now we're waiting and believing to receive it, but we're not seeing it yet. If, in that in-between place, you don't have confidence in God because you are wearing His righteousness and you know He is for you, and it's not because you've sinned or whatever, it's just that while that in-between place, you don't have that confidence, you're going to get your brains beat out.

Luke 10:19 says:

***“Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. “***

He said, “I give you power...*exousia* ...authority...I give you authority.”

Let me ask you a question. When the prodigal came home, what did the father do first? He fell on his neck and kissed him. He loved him in his filthy state. He kissed that boy that was muddy, dirty, and stinky, and whose clothes were rags. The Lord loves you just like you are. And if He wants to change you, He is able to change you. It is His power that changes you. Did the son ask for a robe? Did the son initiate anything that happened next? No. But, when he accepted the love of the father, and he tried to repent, what did the father do next? He put the robe on him. The robe is a robe of righteousness. He took all the evidences of his guilt and his failure and he put on him a robe that spoke of the father's acceptance, of the father's faithfulness, of the father's purity, of the father's innocence. The father hadn't gone and wasted any money. The father hadn't gone and slept with harlots. The father hadn't gone and had parties and blown all this kind of stuff, worshiping the devil, etc. When the prodigal put on the father's robe, he put on the father's character. He put on the father's purity. He put on the father's innocence. He put on the father's goodness.

What happened next? He did what? He accepted the love of the father while he was still filthy. The father covered up all the evidences of his failure with the robe, and then the father gave him a ring. Do you know what that ring was? It wasn't a decoration. That was the signet ring. Anybody bearing the signet ring of the family could do any business in the name of the father, and that ring gave him the **authority**. Hear me please. First, you have

to let the father love you just like you are. Then you accept the father's innocence put on as a robe. Only then will he give you the ring. The ring is the authority. The ring gives you the right to do business in his name.

What was the next thing the father did? He put shoes on him. What are shoes directly related to? They are related to peace.

Reading from Ephesians 6:11 again:

***“Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.”***

If you're falling, if you've been falling, if you're struggling, you've got to find out what part of the armour of God you don't have on. Because if you put on the armour of God you are going to be able to stand in the evil day. You won't be a victim. You won't be defeated by condemnation. You won't be defeated by lies and accusation. And, you won't be defeated during that between when you do the will of God and when you receive the promise.

Read:

***“Wherefore take unto you the whole (the whole armour...not part of it...you're not protected with part of it) armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...”***

I don't mean to be crude here, but what is the main function of the loins? The main function is reproduction. In order to be reproducing in the kingdom of God, in a way pleasing to God, truth is the protection to make sure that whatever is birthed of you through the Spirit is born in truth.



Read:

***“And having on the breastplate of righteousness;”***

The breastplate of righteousness protects the vital organs, especially the heart and lungs. Hello! Righteousness, innocence is to protect the main trunk of the body; to protect the vital organs. Do you know what the word, *vital* means? The word *vital* means life or living. Those organs of the body which are necessary to live. I can live without an arm. I can live without a leg. I can't live without lungs. I can't live without a heart. I can't live without a stomach. Those vital organs are protected by righteousness.

## **INNOCENCE!**

Not innocence you “earn or deserve,” but innocence you receive as a gift and put on!

Read:

***“And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;”***

I put on truth to assure that what is produced of me is of God. I put on righteousness to keep my vital organs safe so that I can live, and then I put on peace. What is so significant about peace? It is insulation between my body and the world. Righteousness doesn't protect me from the world. It protects me from the lies and the accusations of the enemy. Peace protects me from the bumps and bruises of normal life. It is the insulation between my body and normal life.

Isaiah 32:17 says:

***“And the work of righteousness shall be peace;”***

If you don't have righteousness, you CANNOT have Biblical peace!

**“and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.”**

Hello? How many of you are sitting here...you don't have peace...you don't have quietness in the midst of turmoil, and you don't have assurance? You need to memorize this verse. You need to know it. You need to pray it until it becomes a part of you! I looked up the word righteousness, and it means it is the product. What righteousness produces is peace!

***“and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.”***

If you're not excited, you don't have righteousness. That's what the promise is. The product of righteousness is peace, and the effectiveness of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever! I've got a question. Is it any wonder why Jesus said,

***“Blessed (highly favored) are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness...”*** (Matthew 5:6)

And when you're out to get something, here's what you should get:

***“...seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...”*** (Matthew 6:33)

And when you get that, all of these things... what?

***“and all of these things shall be added unto you.”***

What are you lacking? Don't seek what you're lacking. Seek righteousness. We're so caught up with what we're lacking and what we're lacking is really way down the road. If we will get righteousness, it will enable God to add all these things unto us. Right?

Do you understand that when God puts his righteousness on you, you don't have a past? That means you never slept with anybody that wasn't your mate. That means that you've never been involved in pornography. That means you've never been molested. When He puts His robe of righteousness on you that means you've never been rejected. You've never been abandoned. You've never lied, you've never cheated, and you've never stolen anything! When He puts His righteousness on you, you are innocent! My God!

Did you bring your failures in here or did you bring His righteousness? My God! The robe of righteousness is peace. Does anybody want some peace? Does anybody want quietness? Does anybody want assurance?

Continuing with Isaiah 32:18:

***“And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.”***

Is your life a life of turmoil? Is your life a life of turmoil? You don't need peace. You need righteousness, because you can't get peace without righteousness. You've got to accept Him making you innocent.

Continuing with Ephesians 6: 13:

***“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day...”***

Hear me right now. Do you understand when this harvest breaks and these people start pouring in here, that the devil is going to do everything he can to come against us, and the only way that we're going to be able to survive and our harvest be perpetuated and continue is that you're going to be girded, you're going to have on the breastplate, you're going to have on the helmet, you're going to have on the shoes, you're going to be carrying the shield and the sword, and it won't matter whatever the devil says. It won't matter what he says. It won't matter what he does. The world, the community; nobody is going to be able to put us on a "guilt trip." We're going to know that we're in the will of God. So, just let it rage on because Jesus is the winner! If we don't get this now when the harvest breaks, it's not going to last very long! We've got to get this!

Let me ask you a question. What's more frustrating...having to wait a little while to let the Lord work on us so when the revival starts it doesn't quit or for the Lord to give it to us right now because we're impatient and when the devil comes against us, we can't stand and so we lose it? Which would you prefer? You've got to get this. This isn't theoretical stuff. This is practical daily living in the midst of revival.

***"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."***

Get this. Righteousness comes from faith. And, before the devil can even get to my righteousness, he's got to get past my faith. But, if he gets past my faith, the righteousness my faith has produced is there to bounce off.

Read:

***“And take the helmet of salvation...***

That’s the knowledge you know you’re saved. I know I’m saved. I have the truth. I have righteousness. I have peace. And, I have faith. Now, I’m going to put on the knowledge of my salvation. All of that is for my defense. And, once I get prepared where I can survive in the evil day, now it’s time to go on the offense. What do I do?

***“...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”***

You see, that’s *rhema*. That’s the Word of God. If you say unto this mountain, “be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea,” that’s *rhema*. You speak *rhema* unto the mountain and it will move. But if all you are using is a sword, you are wide open for a counter-attack. And then you begin to doubt that your sword works. You have to take care of yourself spiritually so that you can stand while you are working away with the Word.

Luke 10:19 again says:

***“Behold, I give unto you power (exousia...authority) to tread (to stomp contemptuously upon) on serpents (the devil’s deceptive ability) and scorpions, (his ability to torment) and over all the power of the enemy: (the adversary) and nothing shall by any means hurt you. “***

I have a question. That’s a nice statement, but what makes it true? I’ll tell you what makes it true: truth, righteousness, peace, salvation, faith, the Word!

***“...nothing shall by any means hurt you.”***

Romans 8:31 says:

***“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”***

Do you know what that sounds like to me? That sound to me like assurance. Wouldn't assurance and confidence be synonyms?

Let's back up to verse 31:

***“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified...”***

Once you get justified what's going to happen?

***“...and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”***

You've got to be justified before you can get glorified!

Ephesians 3:20 says:

***“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”***

Reading Romans 8:30 again:

***“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”***

Now reading John 15:8 which says:

***“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”***

Hello? Do you know how we're glorified? We are glorified by being able to glorify God. If you get justified, that means you're declared innocent; you are acquitted, you are made righteous, then you will be glorified. And, the way He glorifies us is being glorified himself through us.

***“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit...”***

Does anybody wonder where we are in revival? This is what we've got to get. You can't be glorified until you're justified. And, there are many of us who are forgiven but not justified. You've become pardoned, but you haven't become innocent.

Truth is a dangerous thing in the hands of people that have only been forgiven, but are still carrying guilt around, because they will use truth as a weapon to make themselves feel better. That's exactly right.

I'm going to tell this story to the end of God and when you hear the end of the story you'll know why it's to the glory of God. Brother Jimmy Hooker is part of us. We love him. He's out from this church. Praise God. But when he was here several people who went with him were embarrassed because any kind of rejection at all of his message and he would,

what he would call, “torch” people. Do you know why he did that? He came back here two weeks ago today, sat in my office and wept and said, “I’ve run from the healing of shame you tried to get me to receive while I was here.” And, he began to tell me the things he had never dealt with from his past. He killed a woman who had six children. He was driving drunk and hit her and killed her. And, because He was driving on a suspended license, but his wife who was his second wife, lied and said that she was driving because He would have gone to jail for a long time. He had not been able to forgive himself for that.

His grandfather wouldn’t take him someplace, and he got upset and went and got behind the car. His grandfather not knowing Jimmy was behind the car, backed over him. The grandfather was so distraught over injuring Jimmy’s legs, almost for life, he had a heart attack and died. The family, for years, blamed Jimmy for killing his grandfather.

There were many other things that happened to Jimmy that I’m not at liberty to tell, and maybe someday he will tell. Suffice it to say, Jimmy was molested many times, and he couldn’t bear the results of that. And what was so beautiful as we prayed with him in the prayer room and watched all of that stuff leave him as he gave all of that stuff to God finally and was able to deal with it, was that God gave him a different spirit. You could feel it happening. God gave him a tenderness and compassion, and he began to see that those people who were rejecting what he was saying, weren’t rejecting him; they thought they weren’t good enough for God so they were rejecting what he was saying. They looked like they were hard but what they were really doing was expressing what they already thought that God was going to do; that God was going to reject them because they weren’t good enough. Jimmy hadn’t been able to see that, so he thought they were just stubborn and rebellious, so he’d “torch” them which only convinced them that they were right: they weren’t good enough for God.

That’s why if you want to be glorified you want God to be glorified through you. You’ve got to first be justified. You can’t go handle truth except you do it in love. And, you’re not going to speak the truth in love if you don’t believe you’re loved. Hello?



Read Romans 8:30 again:

***“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.”***

What is the conclusion of all of this? The effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance. And here is the assurance.

***“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him and also freely give us all things?”***

I’ve got a question. What are you lacking? What do you need? What do you truly need for your personal life? What do you need to be used of God? What is it you’re lacking that you need? What is the pressure, the struggle that you’re under? He said that He would freely give us all things.

***“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”*** (Matthew 6:33)

If you’re not receiving, it’s because you don’t have any confidence; you don’t have any assurance. And you don’t have confidence and assurance because you don’t believe that you’re innocent. You think you’re having to earn something because you know that you don’t deserve it.

Continuing with Romans 8:33:

***“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect...”***

Now listen. Who shall separate me from the love of God...man or devil? Man may accuse me, the devil may accuse me, or my own shame will accuse me. The word, *charge* there means to accuse...to accuse of wrong doing. Paul is saying there, “Who is going to accuse me of wrong doing?” It’s God that justifies, or declares me innocent, or acquits me. Are you getting this? How can I be accused? It’s God that makes me innocent.

You’re living under such condemnation. We’re in this period of time that says, “well we’ve done everything that’s supposed to be done, somebody missed it, or we’re not worthy, or we’re not doing something right. That’s not true! You’ve done everything that’s been asked of you, and here we are. We’re in this in-between place; between doing and receiving. But, God uses the in-between place to fine-tune our lives so that when we receive what He’s got for us it doesn’t destroy us. We not only can participate in it, but be saved in it. Do you understand that’s why God is able to give; to add all these things to you?

When you get righteousness, you don’t let the blessings of God become your God. When you’ve got righteousness, you don’t let the gifts of the Spirit operating in you cause you to think you’re somebody special or above somebody. You know that it is God righteousness. It is Him declaring you innocent that enables you to be anointed. You’re not anointed because you pray ten hours or fasted seven days. You are anointed because you have been declared innocent which enables the anointing of God to rest upon you. So when you get up and you preach or you testify or you witness and things happen you don’t say, “Boy, I did good, didn’t I?” You say, “Praise God! Isn’t it awesome that God could use me! Oh! That was God!” If no one else knows it’s God, you know it’s God!

And God can add anything to you. He can give you anything because He can trust you with it, because your righteousness protects you from taking the credit for it. You give Him the glory, and because you give Him the glory, He can trust you with it because you won't let things and positions and titles and miracles and full altars, and lines standing outside of baptisteries; you won't allow those things to cause you to say, "My...we're a great church. Everybody else ought to kiss our toe-nails."

Whoever's going to be greatest of all must become servant of all. How can somebody that's got the greatest thing going be a servant and be humble and not have a haughty attitude about it? Righteousness.

Read Romans 8:33 again:

***"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."***

The process is justification. The product is righteousness. Justification is me being acquitted. I'm being charged. I may go to trial, but the verdict comes back from the judge: innocent. How can that be? Because, before sentence could be passed an Innocent One took my guilt and gave me His innocence. So when the judge looks at me, the judge says, "Innocent."

Continuing with Romans 8:34:

***"Who is he that condemneth?..."***

Who condemns? Who can condemn me? What's the justification for me knowing I cannot come under condemnation? So many of us are under condemnation. Do you know why we are under condemnation? Because in order to overcome condemnation, what do we look to? Our performance. What does Paul say we're supposed to look to?

***“It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God...”***

Who is he that condemns us? Do you know why we can't be condemned?

***“It is Christ that died, ye rather, that is risen again...”***

What does that mean? He took my guilt. My sin is already paid for. The Innocent One has already suffered as guilty. The just for the unjust. He gave me his innocence. I can't be accused or come under condemnation.

One of the greatest prophets; I've never been able to get him here because I didn't really personally meet him until he was well into his seventies...he's like 86 or 87 now is Brother T.W. Barnes. He has a very simple ministry, but he is a true prophet. He is a seer. There are very few men in our movement like him. There's nothing showy about him. He's as "country" as you can get. But, he's had as many miracles in the last fifty years as anybody I know of. People call him on the phone all the time. He sits in his office, people call him on the phone, he speaks to them a Word from God and things happen all the time. Only God knows the things that have happened through this man's ministry. More things happen outside of church services through his ministry than inside church services. He's always praying for somebody.

I was sitting in my office a few years ago, down as I could be, feeling like I was through with my ministry. Brother Barnes calls me on the phone. I'd never talked to him before. It was like getting a phone call from God. And, he said exactly what I was thinking. He said, "Brother Wright, I know you're feeling like your ministry is over with and you'll never be used..." That was exactly what I was thinking. I had prayed that that very morning. But, he said, "I just wanted you to know the Lord wanted me to call you and tell you the greatest days of your ministry are ahead of you not behind you. In fact, I saw you in a night vision last night. I was in a huge building with thousands of people I did not know. There were

only two people in the building that I knew. One was Brother Sciscoe and the other was you. Brother Sciscoe prayed for people who were sick during the beginning of the service and people got healed of cancer, and whatever, and you preached. I've never heard anyone preach with such anointing, and as you finished you led us into the glory of God. I don't anybody that knows how to do that. I'm an old man, and you led us into the glory of God, and every person in that building could not stand still. Everybody was dancing and leaping together without any pressure or push. We just came into the glory of God.

Several years ago, Brother Barnes had never offered any of his tapes for sale and some of the preachers convinced him to offer tapes, and I bought everyone of them. I thought, "Man, if I could just listen to all of them maybe I'll get something from the Spirit. I got really frustrated, and the only time I had ever talked to him I called him. He said he knew who I was. I guess he did, but I couldn't imagine him knowing me a peon. But I said to him, "Brother Barnes, I've been listening to your tapes. Can you tell me how to be used of God in the Spirit? He "blew my mind." He said, "Brother Wright, the Lord is going to use you but you're not being used like God wants to use you because you need a revelation of the blood." I'm thinking to myself, "I called you long distance for some inside information on what it feels like...and you're talking to me about the blood." He's talking on and I'm not even listening. I'm just fussing in my mind with him. About halfway through, I thought, "Well, I need to listen to what he's saying. It was then that I picked up on what he was saying that was, unless you have a revelation of the blood, and righteousness is purchased by blood, the devil will always be able to cause you to doubt yourself and God's willingness to use you. He said that none of us can be used of God because we're dedicated enough or because we're perfect enough. He said you will never get enough into the Spirit and be used of God unless you can trust the blood.

I'm going to translate that into this message. Unless you are confident you have been justified, you have accepted the gift of righteousness, you have put on the breastplate, when you try to be used of God your mind will be full of doubt. Your mind will be full of doubt. And while God's trying to cut off that little voice inside of you that's telling you why

you're not worthy and why you can't do this. That's why the Lord speaks to us to witness to people on the street, in the store or in the restaurant and we keep our mouth shut. Do you know why? Because we are not believing that we are innocent and loved and accepted by God. We don't have the assurance. We are afraid of failing and being rejected. Those are the two elements of fear called timidity.

***“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; (spirit of timidity) but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (II Timothy 1:7)***

Do you understand that this is the key that opens the door? That's why he said,

***“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness...”***

We say, “I want to be right with you God,” but do you know what we mean when we say “right with God?” When we think of being “right with God,” do you know what we think of? Not failing. Don't we? “I want to be right with God.” That means I don't make mistakes.

To be right with God means to be in a state of righteousness which means you are innocent, which means that no performance can ever get you there. So, if you want to be “right with God,” you have to accept His righteousness. His innocence...you are clothed in His innocence. And when you seek first the kingdom and His righteousness, and you get His kingdom and His righteousness, there isn't anything He can't trust you with. There isn't any promise He can't give you and know that you can believe for it and give Him the glory when it comes. There isn't any ministry that He can't trust you with. There isn't any place that He's afraid of taking you if you can just be righteous. Just righteous. His anointing, his burden is available to flow through those who just accept His righteousness.

Continuing with Romans 8:34:

***“Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword. As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is Christ Jesus our Lord.”***

Amen.

In closing turn to Isaiah 54:17:

***“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.”***

Nothing by any means shall hurt you.

Isaiah 54:11-17 says:

***“O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not come near thee. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy: “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.”***

Amen!



## **CLOSING REMARKS TO THIS MESSAGE**

You have to get these messages. We can't go forward without this revelation. This is our protection. This is what is going to keep us right with God when things aren't going great. This is what's going to keep us from taking the credit and touching the glory of God when He is working in an awesome way. This is what's going to let us be used of God mightily. It's His righteousness. If you haven't gotten it yet and even if you think you've gotten it, it would be to your benefit to listen to these messages again. In Jesus name!

(Additional remarks for the published document of June 2025.

I want to remind you that these "chapters" are actually "transcribed messages preached/taught to Antioch in the late 1990's ('97,'98). That is over 25 years ago. I probably would not use the same approach on some things today as I did then. But, I have not felt the direction or the need to edit the 1997/8 "me"/ministry out of this book.

There is not anything that I taught or preached then that I do not still believe now. Hopefully, I have gained more "wisdom" and "understanding," but I still believe THE BIBLE TO BE LITERALLY TRUE TODAY AS MUCH AS I EVER HAVE.

If anything is contained herein that is "offensive" to you, I pray that you will not allow my "direct approach" to be used as an excuse to justify yourself in rejecting the Truth of the Word of God. In Jesus' Name!)

Chester M Wright

Bishop

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